BURNS.

Robert Burns

THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

Robert Burns.

EDINBURGH:
W. P. NIMMO, HAY, & MITCHELL.

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COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

WITH AN ORIGINAL MEMOIR

BY

WILLIAM GUNNYON.

EDINBURGH:
W. P. NIMMO, HAY, & MITCHELL.
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PREFACE.

In introducing this edition of Robert Burns's Poetical Works to the public, the Editor has to state that his aim has been to produce, as far as possible, an edition which might lay claim to completeness. He is aware that many readers, whose opinion he has every desire to respect, may not agree with him as to the propriety of reproducing every line of each poem in all cases; but a very considerable experience of men in relation to books induces him to believe that a large proportion of the reading public —and that not the least fastidious in matters of feeling and taste—prefer to have an author's works as they came from his pen. He also believes that the number of *Bowdlerised* editions of popular authors which circulate at the present day is the result of a want of courage on the part of publishers, who have a dread of offending the fancied over-sensitiveness of the bulk of the reading public; for he does not believe that such a feeling exists to an extent which would warrant the indiscreet purification of the bulk of our standard literature. No admirer of the poet can defend the too frequent coarseness of many of the poems; but it should be remembered that Burns himself, in the two editions of his works which he lived to see through the press, did not include any of

those which offend against good taste;—most of them refer to purely local matters, and were evidently looked upon by the Poet as the mere fugitive emanations of his Muse, hurriedly produced for the amusement of his friends. No poet was so prodigal in giving MS. copies of his poems to his intimates and correspondents; and after his death, when every line he had written was eagerly collected and read, no difficulty was found in gathering them together, and no regard for the Poet's memory or good name prevented their publication.

While the occasional grossness of Burns is not to be denied, it may with safety be affirmed that there is positively nothing demoralising or seductively impure in his writings —nothing that can for one moment be put in comparison with the deliberate and pernicious prurience of the modern sensation novel, which finds its thousands of readers. In a sense, the bad even springs from the good—

> "Misled by Fancy's meteor ray
> By passion driven;
> But yet the light that led astray
> Was light from Heaven."

The descriptive improprieties are but the momentary excesses of a healthy and vigorous nature, which, though prone to err, was seldom designedly gross or wicked. Besides, the censorious critics have too often forgotten his services on the side of purity. It ought to be remembered that he found the Scottish Muse a dirty, ribald bawd, and that he made her presentable everywhere. But for him the ancient lyric poetry of our country would at the present day have been all but dead and forgotten—he breathed through it the spirit of his own genius, and it is now as imperishable as the more immediate of his creations.

The moderate price of the series to which this volume belongs rendered a very full annotation impossible; but

avery Poem, Song, and Epigram, the history of whose production is known, will be found to have its illustrative note, care having been taken, from a collation of authorities, to be as accurate as possible. The Editor believes that in no similar edition hitherto published has any attempt been made in this direction, and this must be his apology for having ventured upon his present task. In preparing the Glossary, he has been guided in his renderings of Scottish words and phrases more by the meaning conveyed in the text than by the arbitrary meanings given by Jamieson and other authorities. Burns's phraseology was in many cases his own; and, like all men of true creative power, he made his native tongue his slave, and adapted and moulded it to the expression of his genius. The Poems, Epistles, Epigrams, and Songs are arranged separately, and as nearly as can be ascertained in the order in which they were produced. The Editor believes that this mode of arrangement will be found to have its advantages.

The Appendix to the graphic Biographical Sketch by Mr William Gunnyon, in which are grouped together all the authentic personal sketches of the poet by his friends and intimates, will, it is hoped, very materially assist the reader in judging what manner of man he was, and the personal and intellectual impression he made on his contemporaries.

The Editor has to thank several friends for assistance received; and he desires specially to note the valuable service rendered by Mr Alexander Gunn, a reader at Paul's Work printing-office. Authors and others who are hourly indebted to the intelligence and industry of the reading staff at their printer's will readily appreciate the value of such assistance, more especially when it is stated that any editorial labour bestowed on the present edition was given from day to day as the sheets passed through the press, and in the midst of the harass and worry of business.

It is all but needless to acknowledge obligations to pre-

vious editors and biographers of the Poet. The Editor knows that every page will show that his humble labours would have been impossible had it not been for the many eminent workers in the same field, from Dr Currie down to Mr Robert Chambers, the latest and ablest of them all.

NOTE TO THE NEW EDITION.

The Editor is much gratified to find that his efforts, in conjunction with the Publisher, to produce a well-printed and complete edition of Burns's Poetical Works, at a price so low as to bring it within the reach of all, have been so fully appreciated. To his friends, Mr William Gunnyon, Dr Longmuir, of Aberdeen, and others, he is indebted for many hints and corrections which have been made use of in the present edition.

Several reviewers, who have done more than justice to the editor's labours generally, appear to have misconceived his meaning in defending the complete reproduction of all the poems, and have discovered some inconsistency in his doing so, after the statement made in his preface, that none of those poems containing objectionable passages were included by the poet in the editions published under his own superintendence. The editor believed he did right in reprinting in full all the poems and songs which had already been given to the world, in a more or less fragmentary state, by previous editors. The original impropriety of printing many of them cannot be questioned; but as they have now become public property, they must find a place in every edition of the poet's works which pretends to completeness. It would have been an easy matter to have introduced several pieces of the same class, which were undoubtedly written by the poet, and which have never appeared in any edition of his works; but to have done this would only have been to repeat the offence against good taste and the memory of the poet which his friends committed when they printed all the MSS. which happened to be in their possession at the time of his death.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.*

BY

WILLIAM GUNNYON.

ROBERT BURNS, the Ayrshire bard, so lauded and lionised for a short period of his stormy and chequered career, and comparatively so neglected during his few later years, has at length risen to an elevation in the affections of his countrymen, and of the lovers of song in general, which has no parallel in the annals of literature. Peer and peasant alike, the man of the highest culture and the humblest mechanic and tiller of the soil, have enshrined him in their heart of hearts. The shepherd on Australian and New Zealand plains—the digger in Californian and Columbian mines—the sailor on the deck, and the soldier in his barrack—the colonist on the banks of the St Lawrence, and by the shores of the great American lakes—in short, wherever men of British birth or descent are found, there are the admirers of the Scottish poet, animated by a warmth of admiration which is entirely exceptional; all the warmer, doubtless, because of his marred and imperfect life, and because he who has been the channel of imparting so much happiness to the world was himself, on the whole, so unhappy. Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare have, perhaps, more than other poets, left the impress of their mind on their compatriots, but none of them has leavened the thought and speech of the great mass of his countrymen so thoroughly as Burns, for he was essentially "one of the people" in birth, breeding, and instincts; and, though it is not intended to assert that he equals these intellectual giants in perfect development and poetical results, he has been taken

* For various important testimonies explanatory and illustrative of the poet's life, the reader is referred to the Appendix at the end of this Sketch.

more closely to men's bosoms than any of them, if we except, perhaps, the bard of Avon, whose admirers belong more exclusively to the educated classes and to habitual play-goers. The poor man whom Burns's vigorous assertion of the native nobility of manhood has enabled to bear up more courageously under the proud man's contumely and the insolence of office; the patriot, of every social rank, whose sentiments he has clothed in the noblest language; the youthful lover for whom he has uttered, more exquisitely than himself was able, the sweetest and tenderest accents of passion; the man whose heart glows with sympathy for every living thing, and who sees not even the mouse, "wee sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie," turned up in her nest, nor the "mountain daisy" crushed with the tearing ploughshare, without a pang and an outburst of human feeling, recognise in Burns a munificent benefactor.

Robert Burns was born on the 25th of January 1759, in a humble cottage about two miles south of Ayr, not far from Alloway Kirk and the banks of the Doon, now rendered immortal by his verse. The date of his birth he has quaintly recorded thus:—

> "Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
> Was five-and-twenty days begun,
> 'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'
> Blew hansel in on Robin."

The "Janwar' win'" never ceased long at a time to blow on him; and though he manfully tried to

> "Snap his fingers puir and hearty
> Before its face,"

it was in the long run too chill for him, and he succumbed under it on the 21st of July 1796, in the thirty-eighth year of his age. His early, and in some respects tragical, death evoked a good deal of sympathy which might have been better displayed during his life—though this is a sore point with his countrymen, and has given rise to animated discussions in which a good deal has been well said on both sides of the

question, and to which we shall have occasion to refer more fully in the sequel of this biography. His father, William Burness, was a native of Kincardineshire, having been born on the estate of the Earls Marischal, forfeited for their share in the rebellion of 1715. Burns delighted, with all the warmth of a Jacobite minstrel, to imagine his humble "forbears" as having shared in the dangers and sacrifices of the high-born Keiths, though it seems there is no solid foundation for such a supposition. At least, the poet's father took measures to give Jacobite leanings, so far as he was concerned, the most authoritative denial possible among the peasantry of Scotland —a certificate, namely, under the hand of the minister of his native parish, that he had had "no hand in the late wicked rebellion," (1745.) He shaped his course for Edinburgh, where he worked hard as a gardener, and suffered many privations He afterwards migrated to Ayrshire, serving first one gentleman and then another in the capacity of gardener; and, intending to follow out the profession of a market-gardener, he leased seven acres of land near the bridge of Doon, and built on it a small clay cottage, to which he brought, in December 1757, a young wife, Agnes Brown, the daughter of a Carrick farmer; and Robert Burns, their eldest-born, first saw the light in this "clay bigging," when the "blast o' Janwar' win'" aforesaid blew hansel in on him.

The poet's father was a most remarkable man. His illustrious son said of him:—"He was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large, where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, for which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who have understood *men, their manners, and their ways*, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son." Mr Murdoch, the early and almost only teacher of Burns, speaks at greater length of the character of William Burness:—"I myself have always considered William Burness as by far the best of the human race that ever I had the pleasure of being acquainted

with, and many a worthy character I have known. I can cheerfully join with Robert in the last line of his epitaph (borrowed from Goldsmith)—

"And even his failings leaned to virtue's side."

After characterising him as a husband, father, and master, and as to his deportment towards inferiors and superiors, Mr Murdoch proceeds: "But I must not pretend to give you a description of all the manly qualities, the rational and Christian virtues, of the venerable William Burness. Time would fail me. I shall only add, that he carefully practised every known duty, and avoided everything that was criminal; or, in the apostle's words, *therein did he exercise himself, in living a life void of offence towards God and towards men.* Oh for a world of men of such dispositions! You will perceive from these few particulars what kind of person had the principal hand in the education of our poet. He spoke the English language with more propriety (both with respect to diction and pronunciation) than any man I ever knew with no greater advantages. This had a very good effect on the boys, (Robert and Gilbert,) who began to talk and reason like men much sooner than their neighbours."

The Burness family produced also a very respectable and superior man in William's elder brother, who, settling in Montrose, became one of its worthiest and most influential citizens. His son, the poet's cousin, a legal practitioner in that town, who acted so kindly to the poet in his last illness, and to his widow afterwards, was the father of the distinguished Sir Alexander Burnes, whose melancholy fate at Cabul in 1842 excited so much commiseration. It remains to notice the poet's mother, Agnes Brown, who is described as "a very sagacious woman, without any appearance of forwardness or awkwardness of manner," and whom the poet resembled in appearance and in address more than he did his father, though inheriting from the latter an irritable and melancholy temperament which frequently brought him to the verge of insanity, and forms after all the best and most honest excuse for those occasional excesses that marked his earlier life, and

recurred in his later years with a frequency that rendered his own life miserable, producing the most serious blot his traducers—for he has still traducers—strive to affix to his fame, and which his admirers are concerned not to justify, but to admit in candour and in sorrow of heart, and attempt to refer to constitutional rather than to moral causes. They produced a flaw in a rare jewel which half destroyed its value, and fixed a dark spot on a constellation which would otherwise have been more of "a bright particular star" than it unfortunately is.

In August 1787, when in his twenty-ninth year, Burns addressed an autobiographical letter of great value to Dr Moore, who, as a literary Scotchman, could not but be much interested in such a prodigy as the Ayrshire bard. We will abridge from this what information seems necessary for the portion of his life to which it refers, supplementing it from other sources where it is defective.

For the first six or seven years of his life Burns's father occupied the small cottage in which the poet was born, acting as gardener to a gentleman of no great estate in the neighbourhood, while the mother managed a small dairy. Wishing to prevent his family from being dispersed as soon as they were able to do farm work of the humblest kind, William Burness, with the assistance of his master, entered, at Whitsuntide 1766, on a lease of the small farm of Mount Oliphant. But the poverty of the soil, and the want of capital, rendered it a ruinous affair; and the "laird" meanwhile having died, and the management of his affairs having fallen into the hands of a merciless "factor"—a sort of being detested by humble Scotchmen—the lease was broken after about twelve years of it had run. The family then removed to Lochlea, in the parish of Torbolton—(Mount Oliphant is in Ayr parish)—a farm larger and better, and for four years fortune seemed to smile on them; but a misunderstanding having arisen as to the conditions of the lease, and the matter having been submitted to the proper legal tribunals, and decided against William Burness, that worthy man—his substance swallowed up in the vortex of litigation, and his family brought to the brink

of ruin—was kindly released, on the 13th of February 1784 from further contention with adverse circumstances. harsh factors, and litigious landlords, by

> "Death, the poor man's dearest friend,
> The kindest and the best."

That in this man lay imbedded not only the elements, but existed in full development all the ingredients of what makes a hero—above all, "the stalk of carl-hemp in man," the firm resolve and spirit of independence, so much talked about—so much longed for, but never possessed in any really useful or practical degree by the poet, is patent to all who have studied his history. In fact, he possessed them so fully, that, coupled with his native irascibility, it is not to be wondered at if he insisted on his rights, or his supposed rights, with a rigour and tenacity that may partly explain the troubles of his life. But his true manhood, heroism, and sterling worth can never be so well appreciated or estimated as in connexion with his exertions and sacrifices for the education of his family—a consideration usually so dear to the Scottish peasant—which we will now briefly record.

When he was six years of age the poet was sent to a school at Alloway Mill, taught by a person who soon after received a more valuable appointment. William Burness, in conjunction with several neighbours, then engaged a young man, Mr John Murdoch, already referred to, agreeing to pay him a small quarterly salary, and to lodge him alternately in their houses. This mode of securing the services of a teacher in the more thinly-inhabited districts of Scotland is not yet obsolete; and we have known young men, who have been thus humbly employed, and apparently in a position less comfortable and independent than that of an ordinary hind, ultimately rise to eminence, and what in Scotland may be termed high social rank, as ministers of the word, intermarrying with the "landed gentry," and sitting honoured guests at the tables of noblemen. Murdoch became greatly attached to Robert Burns and his younger brother Gilbert, but above all to their father, whom we have already seen him describe as a model

of every Christian virtue. The boys were taught by him reading, writing, arithmetic, and grammar, in all of which, thanks to Murdoch's enthusiasm, and to the father's rational system of conversing with the boys on the subjects of their education, and fully explaining every difficulty as it arose in the course of their studies, they made extraordinary proficiency. That household must have been a singularly interesting one after the hours of labour were over;—the young ardent teacher, the upright, faithful, kindly-severe father, the mother looking in that father's face, and listening to his discourse as if he were of men the chief, the two brothers, both so superior to what is found at their age, all intent on the work of education proceeding in a style and spirit so strangely at variance with its humble environments. Gilbert, and not Robert, would have been fixed upon by him as the likely poet, he being of a "merry," while Robert was of a "sad," countenance; but the poetic temperament is often a melancholy one, deep flashes of merriment streaking fitfully the prevailing gloom. And strange, that poet who more than any other has not merely married immortal verse to music but has produced so prodigally verse that is itself the most exquisite music, had "an ear remarkably dull, and a voice untunable." As a not unnatural concomitant of his melancholy face was what he himself calls an enthusiastic idiot piety, and a boundless, though fearful, delight in all tales of superstition and *diablerie*. "In my infant and boyish days, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry, but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle

terrors." This enumeration of supernatural subjects is exhaustive; and all, and more than all, are repeated in "Tam o' Shanter," "Halloween," and the "Address to the Deil."

What further teaching, in the common acceptation of the term, was got by our poet may be very shortly stated. After Mr Murdoch left for another situation, which was about two years after the family had settled in Mount Oliphant, the father undertook to teach his sons arithmetic by candle-light in the winter evenings, the labour of the boys being required on the farm. He was at this time almost their sole companion, and to his enlightened, manly, and Christian conversation—for he treated them as men—most salutary influences were brought to bear on their moral and intellectual natures. To improve their penmanship, they were sent week about, during a summer quarter, to the parish school of Dalrymple. This happened when Burns was thirteen or fourteen years old. "The good man," says Mr Lockhart, "could not pay two fees, or his two boys could not be spared at the same time from the labour of the farm." The circumstances of the family were at this time most unpropitious. The threatening letters of the factor, which used to set them all in tears, the unproductive farm, the necessity of doing all the work on it among themselves, and of opposing to these wretched conditions the most stubborn resolution and rigid economy, brought it about that the future poet, toiling beyond his strength, and without a sufficiency of nutritious food, never overcame in his appearance and constitution the exertions and privations of that trying and depressing period. But the family clung all the more fondly to each other, and acquired a distant and reserved air, the result of honest pride struggling under disastrous fortunes, which their neighbours attributed to unworthy motives. Next year, Mr Murdoch having received an appointment in Ayr, Burns went one week before harvest, and two after it, to brush up his learning under his old master, sharing with him the same room and bed. The first week was devoted to English grammar, and the other two to a flirtation—a warm if a short one—with French, a language in which Murdoch became extraordinarily proficient.

Burns laboured at this new study with such eagerness and success that he could, according to his brother, translate any ordinary prose author; and we know that to the last he loved to interlard his correspondence with phrases from that language. And when he bethought himself of attempting, in later life, a dramatic composition, among the books he ordered from Edinburgh was a copy of Molière.

The amount and value of his education, however, is not to be judged from these fragmentary school-attendances. He had emphatically "the open eye" which enables its possessor to unlock mysteries never known to many after educational resources have been exhausted, and which gives really a royal road to knowledge. Besides, he had read and digested at an early age many valuable and some ponderous books. His father had borrowed for his reading in addition to his own scanty stock; and wealthy families in Ayr, as well as humble families nearer home, gave him free access to what books of theirs he wished to read. And the manner in which he had been initiated into the proper method of getting at the meaning of an author, coupled with his own clear insight, made his reading greatly different in its effect from the slipshod skimming of frivolous books which is too commonly dignified with that name at the present day. He read the usual school books, especially the Bible and "Mason's Collection." Then "The Life of Hannibal," which awoke within him the martial spirit, and "The Life of Wallace," which, he says, "poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest." In addition to these, let us note as differing widely from each other in subject-matter and spirit, and evincing great intellectual appetite and catholicity in their student, "Salmon's Geographical Grammar," "Derham's Physico-Theology," "Ray's Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation," "The Spectator," "Pope's Homer," "Pope's Works," two volumes of "Ferdinand Count Fathom," and two of "Peregrine Pickle," "Stackhouse's History of the Bible," "Taylor on Original Sin," "Hervey's Meditations," works on gardening and agriculture, "Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding." "Works of

Allan Ramsay," several plays of Shakespeare, a collection of letters, and a select collection of English songs. These last two were great favourites of his. A relative having asked in a book-shop in Ayr for a letter-writer, one of those things in which apprentices and cook-maids find models for their tender correspondence, was furnished instead with a collection of letters by distinguished writers, prefaced with a few simple directions to acquire an easy epistolary style. This Burns studied carefully, and even in early life was very ambitious in his letters to his young friends; and, comparing theirs in reply with his own, of which he retained copies, was sufficiently self-conscious to note and be pleased with his own superiority. To the last his letters betray a laboured ness resulting in a want of ease, except those to a few very intimate friends, to whom he poured out the spontaneous feelings of his heart, in chaste, nervous diction. The "Collection of Songs" was his *vade mecum;* he carried it constantly with him; separated what was the genuine in sentiment and expression from what was fustian and rant; and ascribes to those criticisms by hedgerow and along the highway much of that knowledge of his art to which he ultimately attained.

Daily converse with a man like his father, high-spirited, grave, possessed of knowledge and eager for more, full of Christian feeling, versed in speculative theology, and practised in theological dispute, was in itself no mean educational item. Combine with these the man's life-long and scarcely effectual efforts to keep the wolf from the door, and the self-denial necessary to effect it, demanded from and cheerfully given by himself and his family, and the high style of his thought and character affecting the household to quite a noticeable and noted extent, together with the patriarchal priestly functions performed by him in no formal perfunctory spirit, but in one of godly sincerity, and we have before us a school in which much is to be learned never dreamt of in the highest seminaries—a school eminently qualified to repress conceit, the bane of mere book-taught men—a school in which charity and sympathy with human suffering, and, perhaps, a tear for human frailty, may be found: where a de-

sire for all useful knowledge, but, above all, for the knowledge which is not of this world, is most aptly engendered. In the "Cotter's Saturday Night," which has thrown a halo of poetry around the life of the Scottish peasant that could never have been dreamt of as possible by many even in our own land, and is never almost associated with the idea of peasant life elsewhere, we have a noble picture of him drawn by a son whose failings never completely quenched the holy fire from that household altar which had been lighted up in his heart—the altar of the humble hallowed cottage of William Burness.

The fire of love was now stirred within him, and simultaneously the desire to rhyme. The passion for the sex was the strongest in his nature, and for six or seven years he was, without the least tinge of impropriety, under the influence of "dear, deluding woman, the joy of joys," and his life, despite the hardships of his lot, one delicious dream. Hitherto he had been an awkward, shy, retiring boy; but now his partner in the harvest-rig, a *bonnie, sweet, sonsie lassie*, "unwittingly to herself," he says, "initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below!" She sang sweetly, and it was to her favourite reel that he composed his first song, "Handsome Nell," of which he says:—"It was done at an early period of my life, when my heart glowed with honest, warm simplicity,—unacquainted and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. It has many faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion; and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies, at the remembrance."

He appears to have been less devoted to literature and the Muse for some time after settling at Lochlea than his previous enthusiasm and progress might have led us to expect. But though love was always his main inspiration, he was now so absorbed in his rustic amours,—which were matters possessing all the fascination of novelty for him, and which, prose-

cated in conformity with the usages of the district, not yet obselete, might keep him abroad half the night, and involve the travelling of many miles, going and coming—that for some time he gave little vent to his feelings in song. His labours on the farm were also of the most arduous kind, and for a short time he attended a dancing-school, (he ever after excelled in dancing, and was fond of it;) so that, between the tumult of his youthful feelings, the demand on his energies of his daily toil, the dancing-school, and the diplomacy necessary for success in his own love affairs, and to secure that of his fellow-rustics with their simple maidens—for he was the confidant of half the lovers in the parish—his time was tolerably well occupied. A piece, however, written at this period, beginning

"I dream'd I lay where flowers were springing,"

shows that his powers were maturing, though it lacks the originality of his later efforts, being evidently suggested by, and moulded on, Mrs Cockburn's "Flowers of the Forest."

In his nineteenth summer he was sent to Kirkoswald Parish School to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c.; and in these he made good progress. The teacher had great local fame as a mathematician, and Burns's maternal uncle, who resided in the neighbourhood, welcomed his nephew to bed and board. Thus he could prosecute his studies at no great expense—a very material consideration. This episode in his life coloured its whole future texture; for the acquaintance with practical mathematics he acquired here suggested and qualified him for the Excise as a means of living; and, Kirkoswald parish having a coast line of six miles, the farmers were all more or less engaged in smuggling, and led a rough, roaring, hearty life; and here Burns first learned to mingle in a drunken squabble, and was introduced to a freedom of life and conversation unknown to his earlier years. Superstition flourished here in unabated strength; and in Douglas Graham and his wife Helen M'Taggart, notorious for her superstitious beliefs and fears, he became acquainted with Tam o' Shanter and his "ain wife Kate," of whom he made

such excellent use afterwards. Despite occasional dissipation, however, "I went on," he says, "with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo—a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my *sines* and *co-sines* a few days more; but, stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,

> "'Like Proserpine, gathering flowers,
> Herself a fairer flower.'

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I stayed I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless." His sojourn at Kirkoswald had much improved him. He had considerably extended his reading: he had, in common with a schoolfellow, exercised himself in debate, and laid a firm foundation for fluent and correct utterance on any subject presented for his consideration. He had seen life under a new phase, and had become acquainted with some originals whom, as already mentioned, he afterwards worked up as the materials of poetry.

For three or four years after this, his life at Lochlea was one of arduous rural labour. He still extended his reading, and indulged occasionally in verse-making. He fell seriously in love with the daughter of a small farmer at service in his neighbourhood, and several of his letters to her are in existence. They are conceived and expressed with so much purity as well of thought as of diction, (there is an elevation about them, somewhat stilted, it must be confessed,) which, written as they were by a peasant with an income of seven pounds a year, to a girl hired to do the drudgery about a humble farm, renders them almost unique as literary curiosities. He meant to marry this rustic beauty; and, long after he had seen the most celebrated women of the day in Edinburgh and else-

where, he owned that never had he met with one who inspired him with equal respect—with one whose companionship would have so soothed the demon in his blood—as would that of the daughter of the Galston farmer. That he might be in a position to marry, he resolved to learn flax-dressing. His brother and he had already grown flax on a portion of the farm rented from their father. It was at Irvine, a small Ayrshire seaport, where he commenced training for this new mode of life. His sustenance here seems to have consisted chiefly of oatmeal supplied from home; but, his sweetheart having discarded him, he became a prey to his constitutional melancholy, and he wrote to his father in the strain of one tired of this world, and longing for the next.

But it was not in his nature to be long of one mood. During the carousals of the New-Year his flax-shop took fire, and he was left, "like a true poet, not worth a sixpence." It may be divined that he was not worth much more before the fire. The greatest alteration in his condition, however, induced by his connexion with Irvine, was that he here mixed with some characters of loose morals, and lost that virgin purity of soul, and freedom from personal taint, which had hitherto characterised him. One individual he himself mentions as "a very noble character," who, uniting to the levity of a sailor great strength of character and warmth of heart—one of the first, too, who urged him to print his poems as possessing genuine excellence—was a most dangerous associate and Mentor to one of such impetuous blood. Not long after he wrote "The Poet's Welcome to his Illegitimate Child, and, according to the custom of the time and place, had to appear in his parish church on the stool of repentance. We believe Burns sincerely repented of his conduct; and that the two or three poems written in reference to this unfortunate affair, treating it in a strain of most reprehensible levity, though with great comic *eis* and picturesqueness of expression, resulted from the same feelings that make a wretch at Newgate resolve to die *game*. This was the great turning point in Burns's career as a man. He had lost caste with many whose good opinion was not only desirable but valuable. He

had formed habits and intimacies not calculated to benefit him in any way. By presenting vice to his own mind, though only as it were in self-defence and by way of bravado, as a thing to be treated comically, he undermined the props of virtue reared so assiduously by his noble father; and laid the foundations for much of the misery, self-accusation, and calumny which embittered his after life.

It was during this period that the Torbolton Bachelors' Club was formed, consisting of a few young men of active inquiring intellects. The members met periodically and engaged in a pre-arranged debate. The club-room was in a public-house, but the members' expenses were limited to threepence each a night. Burns was the master-spirit of the club; and the intellectual gladiatorship here indulged in, as formerly at Kirkoswald, was of immense after-benefit to him. He also became connected with a lodge of Freemasons, but whether *their* nightly expenses were by statute limited to threepence, is nowhere entered on the record; though it may be inferred from these lines of a well-known poem—

> "The clachan yill had made me canty—
> I was na fou, but just had plenty—"

that the masonic ideas of brotherly compotation were more liberal.

Gilbert Burns thought his brother was more charming and fascinating at this period of his life than at any other; more light-hearted, and humorous; more self-denying and considerate, and a universal favourite. At their daily labour, or in their Sunday walks, *ennui* was impossible with so brilliant and kindly a companion. What bursts of humour, melting into pathos as the thought of suffering or hardship to any living thing flashed across his mind; what "fancies, chaste and noble;" what kindlings of patriotism over the tale of "Scotia's ill-requited chief;" what conning of old songs, what choice "readings from the best authors," must not have lighted up the intercourse of Robert and Gilbert Burns, and made the bleak fields of Scotia an enchanted Arcadia!

Of the poems written at Lochlea we have already mentioned

one. He had sketched the outlines of a tragedy, but family misfortunes prevented its being ever seriously begun. "Winter, a Dirge," a piece of admirable versification; "The Death of Poor Mailie;" "John Barleycorn," and three fine songs, are mentioned by himself in his letter to Dr Moore as belonging to this period. "Poor Mailie" is one of the very happiest of his earliest efforts, exhibiting what Burns especially excelled in, humour and fancy commingled. The pictures of Hughoe "wi' glowering een and lifted hand," and of poor Mailie, as "owre she warsled in the ditch," are perfect. The pawkiness of "The Dying Words" has its source in the shrewdness and real kindliness of the poet's nature, and "the light that never was on sea or shore" gleams wondrously from this unpretending strain. How carefully he revised his Scottish poems, and how refined and matured his taste, may be learned from his extruding from the corrected copy of the "Elegy" these two lines, that would have been religiously retained by a poet of inferior taste and genius:—

"Noo Robin, greetin', chews the hams
O' Mailie dead!"

From the poems of this period take the following characteristic touches. His manly pride, to which even his affections were sacrificed, is well illustrated in these homely lines:—

"I lo'e her mysel, but darena weel tell,
My poverty keeps me in awe, man,
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
Does little or naething at a', man.

Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse,
Nor ha'e't in her power to say na, man,
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
My stomach's as proud as them a', man."

The subjoined piece of "rustic hamely jingle," shows that even at this early age and in this obscure situation, fame, the last infirmity of noble minds, was not indifferent to him nor deemed beyond his reach:—

"Then out into the world my course I did determine, O;
Though to be rich was not my wish, *yet to be great was charming, O.*
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education, O:
Resolved was I, at least to try, to mend my situation, O."

As has already been stated, Burns's father died at Lochlea on the 13th of February 1784, his end having been embittered by a harassing and unsuccessful litigation. To provide a shelter for the family against the evil day they saw approaching, Robert and Gilbert had leased the uplying farm of Mossgiel, in the neighbouring parish of Mauchline. The poet commenced his new career with a firm resolution to succeed, if success were attainable by strict devotion to the duties that lay before him. But bad seed the first year, and a late harvest the second, lost him half his crops, and, to use his own words, "I returned like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." The Mossgiel era was the determining one of his fortunes and of his pursuits. He here recognised the Muse as his calling. Here in about fifteen months he produced the bulk of those remarkable poems by which his fame was established, and on which it will continue mainly to rest; here he experienced the most exalted ecstasy and the profoundest grief the siren Love can administer; here hungry ruin had him so in the wind that the greatest living poet saw no release from the evils wound round him by adverse fortune but expatriation to tasks and scenes the most alien; here he resolved to give his poems to the world; and hence, the cloud of misery which enveloped him melting away to reveal a purer ether, he was summoned to Edinburgh to a short-lived and luckless ovation.

In the summer of 1784 he was in ill health and worse spirits. Several poems then written reveal him under the pangs of remorse, conscious of errors, imploring Divine forgiveness, and with his thoughts fixed on the life beyond life. It is characteristic that he pleads the strength of his passions as a mitigation of his criminality, thus making the Judge an accessory to the offence. It is also remarkable that, in the midst of his despondency, he sometimes brightened up into wildly licentious humour, as in his epistle to

"Rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin'!"

Soon after he commenced to reside at Mossgiel, he "foregathered" with Jean Armour, the most famous, as his after poems rendered her, of his many loves. She was the daughter of a respectable master-mason, and

"A dancin', sweet, young handsome quean,
Of guileless heart."

Of the six Mauchline belles whom he has described, he says—

"But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'."

He was deeply attached to her, more so than he himself knew, till circumstances threatened to deprive him of her altogether. But we are anticipating.

The earliest of his poems which attracted particular notice was connected with a dispute in matters theological then agitating Scotland, but more especially the west country, the scene of the sufferings and triumphs of the Covenanters, and still in Burns's time famous for its adherence, among the common people at least, to the strictest dogmas of Calvin. In this district, to a notable degree, theological disputation was the chief intellectual discipline of the popular mind, and in the churchyard, before and after service, many and high were the debates

"Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute."

Burns, as might have been expected, entered fiercely into these disputes, and from the vigour of his intellect and the force and felicity of his diction, was a formidable champion or assailant. Above all, the fearless freedom of his remarks, and his resistless humour, made him peculiarly obnoxious to the "unco guid, or rigidly righteous" of the district. At this time some of the local clergy were tinged with views leaning more to Arminianism than to the Calvinism of the

"Orthodox, orthodox; wha believe in John Knox"

in some cases even verging close upon Socinianism. Burns's father had formed opinions with regard to these thorny theological tenets more humane than, as appears to many, the doctrines of Calvin are. These views he had embodied in a little manuscript volume for the guidance of his family. Among William Burness's books was "Taylor on the Doctrine of Original Sin;" and, doubtless, Burns, who was such an omnivorous reader, had in his earlier years studied it attentively, all the more so that it was very probably a favourite with his father. Dr Macgill of Ayr had published an essay which was held to contain heterodox views of the doctrine of Original Sin. A few clergymen, and many of the better educated and more liberal of the upper classes, sympathised with Macgill, while the bulk of the clergy, and the common people almost to a man, were opposed to *New Light* doctrines, adhering steadily to the *Auld Light*. Among those who took part against Macgill was "Daddie Auld," the minister of Mauchline, before whom Burns had already appeared in open church, and done penance as to the matter of

"Sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess;"

and, though Auld had only been performing a very disagreeable duty, the poet would not regard him or his opinions with much complacency. Besides, Burns's landlord, Gavin Hamilton, a friend of "Glib-tongued Aiken" who had defended Macgill before the church courts, and a high-spirited, liberal-minded, generous gentleman, was at feud with Daddie Auld and his session concerning some imputed irregularities, which kirk-sessions in those days were not slow to note and censure. Burns, his own wound fresh, came all the more readily to the assistance of his landlord against what, under any circumstances, he would have deemed petty and oppressive meddling, particularly as he could not but be more than dubious of the morality of some of the more officious and forward of the elders. It cannot be doubted that he often said and wrote things to make people stare, and there is a story that he was seen lounging on horseback before a Mauchline public house door on the afternoon of a "preaching Monday," and deliver-

ing himself with such reckless freedom on the disputed theological tenets of the day to a group of villagers, that he was fairly hissed off the scene.

"Death and Dr Hornbook," another production of this period, is inimitable. In the Torbolton Mason Lodge, Burns and the parish dominie were rival wits. The dominie was full of conceit, and to his scholastic functions had superadded those of apothecary and physician. One night he seems to have been more than usually ostentatious of his medical skill; and as the poet trudged along by "Willie's Mill," the whimsical idea of death, with his scythe and leister, flashed upon his brain, and the result was a poem in the very highest vein of the humorous and grotesque. The two epistles to J. Lapraik are extremely pleasing, exhibiting the poet in the first flush and conscious inspiration of the Muse, and plainly indicating that he had found his calling. The sentiments, despite some rustic snarling at schools and colleges, are manly and generous, and exhibit the poet in a most amiable light.

To revert to the theological frenzy by which the West was possessed, we find Burns, in an epistle to "Goudie, terror of the Whigs," (a Kilmarnock tradesman who had published a volume of Essays discussing the authority of the Scriptures,) associating Goudie with Taylor of Norwich as the two great assailants and underminers of orthodoxy. In the same epistle we have mention of "Black Jock," the favourite butt of Burns's wicked humour, then a clergyman in Kilmarnock, but afterwards translated to Stirling. By all accounts the Reverend John Russell must have been "a gruesome carle." There is a tradition in Kilmarnock that he patrolled the streets on Sundays, grasping a huge cudgel which he had christened his "ruling elder," and beat Sabbath-breakers into their homes. He was a huge black-visaged man, with the voice of Stentor. Says Professor Wilson:—"We remember walking one day—unknown to us a fast-day—in the neighbourhood of an ancient fortress, (Stirling,) and hearing a noise to be likened to nothing imaginable in this earth but the bellowing of a buffalo fallen into a trap upon a tiger, which, as we came within half a mile of the castle, we discerned to

be the voice of a pastor engaged in public prayer. His physiognomy was little less alarming than his voice, and his sermon corresponded with his looks and his lungs—the whole being, indeed, an extraordinary exhibition of divine worship. We can never think it sinful that Burns should have been humorous on such a pulpiteer; and if we shudder at some of the verses in which he seems yet alive, it is not at the satirist."

"Black Jock," otherwise "Rumble John," had a zealous coadjutor in Alexander Moody, "Singet Sawney," minister of the neighbouring parish of Riccarton; but these worthies having had a difference, fell foul of each other in a meeting of presbytery, and in their wrath uttered language so offensive and unbecoming that the godly were scandalised, and the adherents of the *New Light* doctrines in an ecstasy of delight. On this occasion Burns produced "The Twa Herds, or the Holy Tulzie," which, "with a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, met with a roar of applause." This was followed shortly after by "Holy Willie's Prayer," the most daring exposition of Calvinism ever given to the world. Viewed in some aspects it might be justly characterised as profane; but taken in connexion with the cant and hypocrisy of the more prominent sticklers for orthodoxy, and read now in the light of the known debauchery and dishonesty of its mouthpiece, Willie Fisher, it is one of the most terrible satires ever written; nor can it be said to transgress the bounds of satiric exposition. With the "Holy Fair," however, no shadow of fault can be found in the way of profanity. We have here the comic Muse in her most legitimate and attractive guise. And as FUN points out to the bard SUPERSTITION and HYPOCRISY as the objects of laughter, we too join in the mirth; nor are the sanctities of religion in aught violated, nor the mysteries of the sacramental supper ever once alluded to throughout the whole poem. Nay, the interior of the house of God is never entered; and though that "God's acre," in which "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," where the comedy is chiefly enacted, ought to have stirred holiest thoughts within the breasts of those assembled for the cele-

bration of the great Christian festival, the poet merely describes what he saw, and might have seen in many churchyards besides that of Mauchline. It is understood that the publication of the "Holy Fair" struck a fatal blow at the absurdities and indecencies which usually attended those sacramental gatherings.

"Halloween" is a happy effort. In it, as in the "Holy Fair," it was evident that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet. The superstitious observances and pryings into the future handed down from Druidical times, and fascinating to the vulgar mind at all times, are in "Halloween" felicitously touched of, while over all breathes a fine spirit of fun, shrewd observation, and healthful humanity. Haveril Will, Wee Jenny and her granny, who "fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt," fechtin' Jamie Fleck, and Leezie the wanton widow, are alive in this exquisite idyll.

The "Address to the Deil" is a universal favourite. The ridiculous and the sublime are happily blended, and the tone of jocular familiarity assumed towards so great a power—exhibited also in "Death and Doctor Hornbook"—is peculiar to Burns. Many great poets have treated of the devil, but all have done so in the highest mode of seriousness. The familiar hail-fellow-well-met feeling belongs to Burns alone, as well as the inimitable relenting of the concluding stanza.

"The Jolly Beggars" is another poem of this period, and is, as a whole, in conception and execution, the most finished and artistic of all his works. But it was not published during his life. The curtain rises in Poosie Nancy's humble hostelry where such a jovial scene of ragged revelry, quaffing, laughing, jumping, thumping, blazing fire, warm blankets and usquebaugh is revealed, as even the gods might regard with complacency. The maimed soldier and his doxy, poor Merry Andrew, the raucle Carlin, the wee Apollo, the Card, and the wight of Homer's craft, are sketched with firm and skilful hand. It is in its minute fidelity like a picture of Tenier's. Next day the tatterdemalions, with their budgets, bags, and

wallets, will be wandering with the ready trick and fable, and next eve in new combinations will rescue a few hours' mad revelry from unpropitious fate.

Of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" we have already spoken. It is the most sustained and equal of all his efforts, and exhibits him in the most interesting light. It came warm and gushing from the heart, and more than any of his poems exhibits that warmth of devotional feeling and of natural piety which was a marked feature of his genius. It procured for him the acquaintance and friendship of Mrs Dunlop, a descendant of the Wallaces of Elderslie, and in Scotland considered as belonging to the family of the great patriot himself. The "Address to a Mouse" and "The Mountain Daisy" are universally known and admired, especially for the humane interest displayed in them, and for the analogy drawn by the bard himself between their hapless fate and his own.

We have already seen that Burns, with constitutional ardour, had been wooing the "Mauchline belle," Jean Armour; and it soon became manifest that Jean had "loved not wisely, but too well." To mitigate scandal and make such immediate reparation as was possible, Burns gave the unfortunate partner of his indiscretion a written acknowledgment of a private marriage, which in Scotland entitles the holder to all the legal privileges of a wife. But, as the poet's circumstances were known to be straitened, and his character suspected, Armour's father compelled her to surrender the paper, in order to render the marriage null, though, according to the best authorities, the marriage was valid in spite of such surrender. Burns offered to proceed to Jamaica, in hopes of bettering his fortunes, and then return to claim his wife—nay, he even proposed to become a day-labourer at home to support Jean and her expected offspring—but old Armour was implacable; and Jean, naturally of feeble resolution, yielded to paternal threats. The poet's affections, as well as his self-love, were wounded, and he regarded his mistress's conduct with the deepest resentment. He accordingly determined to leave his native country, and engaged to go to Jamaica as bookkeeper on the estate of a Dr Douglas. To

raise the sum necessary for his outfit and passage, he, at the instance of Gavin Hamilton, agreed to publish his poems by subscription, and proposals were therefore immediately issued Hamilton's advice was tendered to willing ears; for we have seen from the suggestions of Richard Brown, and of his brother Gilbert, together with his own hankerings thereafter, that the idea of publication had become almost fixed already.

The treatment of the Armours revealed to him that his passion for Jean was stronger than he himself knew.

In his letter to Dr Moore he says:—"This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother—in truth, it was only nominally mine—and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But before leaving my native country for ever I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power. I thought they had merit; . . . but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. . . . At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to *catch* the characters and *the manners living as they rise.* Whether I have profited time will show."

His wretchedness at this crisis was extreme. He saw himself divorced from the object of his warmest love, for his poverty; and his pride rose in arms. He renewed an intimacy he had formed with Mary Campbell, his famous "Highland Mary;" and it was agreed that they should shortly be married. Before going home to the Highlands to make arrangements for her union with the poet, the lovers had a romantic parting one Sunday in May on the beautiful banks of the Ayr. Mr Cromek says—"Their adieu was performed with all those simple and striking ceremonials which rustic senti-

ment has devised to prolong tender emotions and to impose awe. The lovers stood on each side of a small purling brook," (most probably the Faile,) "they laved their hands in the limpid stream—and, holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other." The lovers exchanged Bibles. That presented by Burns to Mary is now in the monument at Alloway. It is in two volumes. In a blank leaf of the one is inscribed in the handwriting of the bard, "And ye shall not swear by My name falsely. I am the Lord," Levit. xix. 12. On the second volume, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," Matt. v. 33. So keenly does he seem to have felt the faithlessness of Jean that he fences his betrothal to Mary with the most awful sanctions of religion. The lovers never met more, poor Mary having died of fever at Greenock. But her sweet image was faithfully mirrored on the heart of Burns, and few can read unmoved his affecting verses "To Mary in Heaven," written many years after. Mr William Douglas, engraver, Edinburgh, in a paper read before the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, proved beyond a doubt that Burns's attachment to Mary was but an episode in the affair of Armour, a thing never before suspected. But it is quite in consonance with all that we know of Burns's impulsive character. His indignation against Armour was at first furious: "Against two things," he writes at this period, "I am fixed as fate—staying at home, and owning her conjugally. The first, by heaven, I will not do! the last, by hell, I will never do!"

The proposals for publishing, which had been circulated among his friends, were so favourably entertained that the printing of the poems was finally resolved upon. John Wilson, a Kilmarnock bookseller, the "Wee Johnny" of a not very happy epigram, was the printer. During the latter part of June and the whole of July 1786, the now world-famous poems were going through an obscure provincial press. He was still fixed in purpose to proceed to the West Indies, though he now wrote of the matter no longer in the high-tragic, but rather in the comic, vein:—

"Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
And hap him in a cozie biel;
Ye'll find him aye a dainty chiel,
And fou o' glee;
He wad na wrang'd the very deil,
That's owre the sea"

In a more serious mood, however, is the "Farewell to the Brethren of St James's Lodge, Torbolton":—

"Adieu! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the *mystic tie!*
Ye favour'd, ye *enlighten'd* few,
Companions of my social joy;
Though I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, though far awa'!"

In anticipation of his leaving the country it was rumoured that old Armour was preparing to take legal measures to procure caution from the poet for the maintenance of his expected offspring. Burns, either unable to procure the caution required—some five pounds a-year—or deeming himself, from the shabby treatment he had experienced from Jean's father, morally released from all claims of support, removed quietly to the house of a relative, near Kilmarnock, taking with him his chest and what was necessary for his outfit for Jamaica. He was thus nearer the press; and it is by no means unlikely that he kept a sharp outlook for the bloodhounds of the law, as incarceration would be the inevitable result of any *diligence* taken by Armour against the recalcitrant poet. A jail had unusual terrors for him, as we see now, from his letter to Dr Moore, and as we shall see in the sequel, immediately before his death. With his poetic instincts, and out-door habits, a prison were to him, as a cage to a singing bird, as confinement to "the commoners of air." It was amid circumstances so untoward that, in the end of July this year, appeared the wondrous volume, entitled "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect, by Robert Burns," with a manly touching preface, in which the poet modestly asserted his own consciousness

of the poetic gift. The impression was of six hundred copies; and so great was the demand for it that within two months a second edition of one thousand copies was under discussion. After paying all expenses, about twenty pounds remained to the bard—a mere pittance as literary work is now remunerated, and recalling vividly the ten pounds paid to Milton for the first edition of "Paradise Lost"—but perfectly satisfactory as a pecuniary result to the poet himself. The ear of the world was taken as it were by storm. A great original genius was once more vouchsafed to Scotland; and the harp erst touched so skilfully by our Royal James and by Dunbar the "Mackar," was again in hands equally potent. "Old and young," says Heron, "high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even ploughboys and maid-servants would have gladly bestowed the wages they earned the most hardly, and with which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might but procure the works of Burns." Persons of high social and literary rank became interested in him. Professor Dugald Stewart, whose summer residence was then at Catrine, Dr Hugh Blair on a visit to Stewart, and Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop, were all amazed at the prodigality of genius exhibited in the humble volume, and took a lively interest in the history and success of the rustic minstrel.

The Rev. George Lawrie, minister of the parish of Loudon, a man of high culture and character, and on terms of intimacy with the leading Scottish literati, had been much struck with the poems. The author appeared to him a man of too high mark to be allowed to pine in provincial obscurity, or to expatriate himself to a pestilential climate to fulfil the duties of an ignoble occupation. He brought Burns and his book under the notice of Dr Blacklock of Edinburgh, that he might do what he could for both with the literary magnates of the capital. Meanwhile Burns, whose fame was ringing "from Maidenkirk to John o' Groats," was perhaps the most exquisitely miserable individual in the realm; and it was while

passing over a bleak moor between Loudon Manse and Mossgiel in a windy autumn evening, clouds driving across the sky, and "cold pelting showers at intervals adding discomfort of body to cheerlessness of mind," that he composed "The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast," the last song he should ever measure in Caledonia —

> "Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
> Her heathy moors and winding vales;
> The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
> Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
> Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
> My peace with these, my love with those—
> The bursting tears my heart declare;
> Farewell, the bonnie banks of Ayr!"

To Lawrie's letter Blacklock returned a most enthusiastic reply, and suggested that a second edition, more numerous than the former, should be immediately printed. This letter was at once placed in the hands of Burns, and praise so high from so influential a quarter opened new prospects to his poetic ambition. He did not, however, as is generally supposed, and as one might be apt to imagine from his own letters, immediately adopt the resolution of proceeding to Edinburgh. The West Indian scheme was still uppermost, and but for the accidental delay of the vessel in which he had taken out his passage, he would probably have been on his way "owre the sea" ere the prospect of success in the capital had opened on his view. Professor Stewart, at whose house of Catrine Burns had dined in company with Basil, Lord Daer, thus describes the impression produced on him by the poet at this period of his history:—"His manners were then as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent, strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth, but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him, and listened with apparent attention and deference on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper he

would, I think, have been still more interesting, but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance, and his dread of anything approaching to meanness or servility rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard Nothing perhaps was more remarkable among his various attainments than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language when he spoke in company, more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided, more successfully than most Scotchmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology." But in other, and to Burns more genial, company he sought to drown care; and among the Gavin Hamiltons, and Tam Samsons, and other local worthies, it was his pride and his solace to set the table in a roar. Indeed, it was only over the social bowl, or in the act of composing, with the inspiring mantle of the Muse upon him, that he could for a moment forget the sad conditions of his lot.

He at last resolved to try his fortune in Edinburgh, impelled thereto by Blacklock's letter, and by Mr Ballantyne of Ayr, who represented to him that that city was the fittest place for bringing out a second edition with success. He reached the capital on the 28th of November; and being introduced by Mr Dalrymple of Orangefield to the Earl of Glencairn, that nobleman induced Creech, then the leading Edinburgh publisher, and who had in early life been his tutor, to undertake the proposed republication, and got the Caledonian Hunt, one and all, to subscribe for copies at a guinea each. Besides, Mr Mackenzie wrote a highly eulogistic and genial critique of the Kilmarnock edition in the *Lounger;* and this recognition of his genius by the greatest living authority in Scotland at once established and confirmed his reputation among all classes of his countrymen. He found himself at once the lion of the season. The Duchess of Gordon, the witty Harry Erskine, Lord Monboddo, Dr Robertson, Dr Blair, Dr Gregory, Dr Adam Ferguson, Mr Mackenzie, and Mr Fraser Tytler, adopted him into their society, and were more captivated by the vigour of his understanding and the force and brilliancy of his conversation than they had been even

by his wondrous poems. Taken from the plough-tail into the most distinguished society in Edinburgh, into a circle more brilliant and renowned than any that has since graced our ancient capital, and which could not have been surpassed for all that really dignifies humanity in any capital in Europe, the Ayrshire peasant never for a moment lost his head; but, with the witching cup of flattery in his hand, remained unintoxicated; weighed calmly his true position and relation to the magnates of literature, fashion, and rank with whom he was thus strangely brought into contact; foresaw that the popular breeze would soon swell other sails; and meditated an early retreat to the humble scenes and occupations he had so glorified in immortal verse. No taint of awkwardness, servility, *mauvaise honte*, or presumption, infected his intercourse with men whose fame was in all mouths, and into whose society not many months before he could never have anticipated an introduction. The only noticeable trace of rustic breeding was a hardness and decisiveness in delivering his opinions, which made it unpleasant for any one to differ with him, owing partly to his being accustomed to give the law in his own circle at home, but perhaps more to his determination to bate no jot of self-respect, and to assert the dignity of manhood wherever he was one of two or three met together.

The new edition appeared on the 21st of April. There were fifteen hundred subscribers, engaging for two thousand eight hundred copies. "Death and Dr Hornbook," "The Ordination," and the "Address to the Unco Guid," though written some considerable time before, were now first published. The "Brigs of Ayr," "Tam Samson's Elegy," and the "Address to Edinburgh," were the principal new poems which appeared. A few juvenile pieces of no great moment were also added, and the volume was dedicated to "The Noblemen and Gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt." The dedication is extremely characteristic. It breathes a noble spirit of independence, but is couched in language which the severer taste of the present day would pronounce somewhat inflated. To Mrs Dunlop he had written that he would clear between two and three hundred pounds by Creech's edition. The sum

actually cleared must have been about six hundred pounds; so that, on the whole, it is incorrect to charge the Scottish people of that day with stinginess to Burns, as he was patronised and paid more liberally than any Scottish author had ever been before, by his own countrymen at least.

The true source of complaint is, not that the metropolitan aristocracy did not give him money enough, but that they first fêted and then deserted him for some new minister of excitement; that they treated him not as a man but as a thing, as a prodigy, a *lusus naturæ* to be gazed at with vulgar wonder and flung away when curiosity had been sated. He foresaw this, and prepared himself for it, who shall say with how much chagrin and bitterness of heart? For if ever there lived a man who yearned for the loving sympathies of his fellows, and of the most exalted of his fellows, it was Burns. His own heart was so noble, his own instincts so generous, his own sympathies so comprehensive, that neglect hurt him in a manner inconceivable to coarser natures, and "froze the genial current of his soul." And this he felt all the more that he was himself one of the sincerest of men; that in his life as in his poetry there was no affectation or cant; that his loves and friendships and joys were real, and his miseries "no idly feigned poetic pains."

This perfect truthfulness and healthfulness of soul, as has been remarked by a keen observer, is nowhere more strikingly exhibited than in his choice of subjects for his poems. He does not select the distant, the imposing, the great. What lies at his feet, what comes daily under his eye, the joys and sorrows, loves and fears and hopes of quite unheroic personages—farm-labourers and nut-brown maidens of the byre and hay-field and corn-rig—the kye rowting in the loan, the wounded hare, the owrie cattle, the "muirs and mosses many" of his own Scotia, and her lone glens of green bracken, more lovely and beloved than bowers of sweet myrtle, are to him the subjects of finest inspiration. He is everywhere and in everything natural. Strength and gracefulness and perfect mastery of his subject peculiarly characterise him. He is perhaps the most graphic of poets. His descriptions

bring the very scenes before our eyes, for his own vision was clear, and often a single happy epithet makes as it were "a sunshine in a shady place." Withal he is as emphatic as he is vivid. There is nothing weak or garrulous in him. The vigour of his intellectual conceptions is as marked as the more peculiar gifts of the muse. Hence he was no mere poet. In any walk of life, in any department of literature, steady effort would have borne him to the van. He had a fine though uncultivated gift of speculation; and whoever deems that he was a mere moonstruck, melodious singer, unfitted for the ways and works of men, has yet to read his character. For he was full of practical sagacity; not to be duped by any; saw through character at a glance; and, could he have *willed* it strongly, might have commanded any position that he aimed at. But herein lay his weakness. To *will* strongly he had never learned. Whether his passions led him astray with light NOT from heaven; whether hereditary hypochondria had embittered the springs of life, and made world's gear and worldly distinction appear not worth contending for; or the too great strain on his youthful energies necessitated by the unpropitious fortunes of his father had somehow depressed his vital powers, it is needless to inquire. And yet, strong and practical as was his intellect, the finer attributes of the poetic temperament had been largely given to him. In tenderness and playful pathos he is unsurpassed. Humour, especially that species of it characteristic of his countrymen, he possessed in rich abundance. But what intellectual stature, what degree of poetic development, he might have attained under happier circumstances and a longer life, though we may conjecture, we can never know. That he has nevertheless left his impress so strongly marked on his country's thought and speech, makes it the more apparent how great he was, and the more to be regretted that his sun went down ere it had reached its meridian.

A character of such commingled strength and weakness would feel keenly and resent fiercely the neglect of *society* after its first outbreak of vulgar wonder had been sated. And it was well known that he was, in circles less select,

wont to set the table in a roar with sarcasms aimed at the social leaders of the capital. Hence, though his conversation had carried a duchess off her feet, and been the more than nine days' wonder of the season, he began to experience cold looks and distant recognitions from those who before had been boisterous in their welcome and admiration. He had anticipated this; but still it may have so irritated him that a too frequent resort to looser companions, who at least thought they borrowed honour from the Ayrshire bard, and with whom he could take his ease in his inn, may have been the consequence.

It had always been a favourite idea with him to take leisurely pilgrimages over Scotland, visiting scenes famous in history and tradition, and notable as the localities of national song. Accordingly, after the labours of the press were over, and he had the command of, to him, a considerable sum of money, he left Edinburgh on Saturday the 5th of May 1787, in company with Mr Robert Ainslie, a young gentleman of Berwickshire, then serving his apprenticeship as a writer to the signet, to visit the scenery of the Southern Border, so famous in the ditties of the old minstrels whose mantles had fallen upon himself. His intention was to return by Dumfries to inspect the farms on the estate of Dalswinton, belonging to Mr Patrick Miller, one of the earliest and kindest of his Edinburgh patrons, who, Burns's resolution of returning to his original occupation having been expressed, wished greatly to have him for a tenant. Meanwhile Ainslie and the poet pursued their pilgrimage on horseback, Burns bestriding Jenny Geddes, named after the virago who hurled her stool at the head of the Dean of Edinburgh, on the 23d of July 1637, when attempting to introduce the *Liturgy* into the service of St Giles, and with whom the poet's mare seems to have had much in common. He kept a journal of this tour, noting not merely what was picturesque in scenery and strange in adventure, but remarking with great sagacity on men and manners, and furnishing the germs of what might be easily manufactured into several "genteel comedies." After visiting most of the famed localities of the Southern Border

with the exception of the "dowie dens" of Yarrow, which he was forced to stop short of, no doubt much to his disappointment, by bad rainy weather, he crossed over into England, visiting Alnwick, Warkworth, Morpeth, Newcastle, Hexham, Wardrew, Longtown, and Carlisle. From Carlisle, on June 1st, he addressed a letter, in the broadest vernacular of Scotland, to Mr William Nicol of the High School, a man of some ability but of extreme coarseness and rudeness of manners, and a teacher of extraordinary severity. His name is preserved beyond the possibility of decay in "Willie brew'd a peck o' maut." In that letter he says: "I'll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore and the branks bide hale." From Dumfries he proceeded to Dalswinton, lingering about a week in the district, admiring the beautiful scenery of the Nith, but dubious of risking the profits of his muse on fields stony and "out of heart." He arrived in Mauchline on the 9th of June; and when the son who, six months before, had left Mossgiel poor, comparatively obscure, skulking from a jail, with his tenderest affections cruelly lacerated, and his relationship spurned by a village mason, opened the door of Mossgiel homestead and stood unheralded amid his family, his name now the most famous in the land, his genius recognised by the highest tribunals, his social successes ringing "Scotland thorough," great must have been his mother's pride and joy, though all she said was, "O Robert!" and great the pride and joy of the faithful Gilbert and of the rest of the household, though as quietly expressed as their mother's had been.

He immediately called on the Armours, ostensibly to see his daughter. Jean had, in the previous September, given birth to twins, and it was arranged that one of them, a boy, should be brought up at Mossgiel, and the other, a girl, by the Armours. He found the Armours only too well pleased to see him, and their servility stirred his bile, and provoked his misanthropy. His prospects were uncertain, farming he was afraid to risk, and he still entertained the idea, as a last resource, of trying Jamaica. He seems, from a letter of this period to Nicol, to have had an access of melancholy, dismal

forebodings of the future, a distrust of fortune, a suspicion that the great had been using him as a mere passing instrument of excitement, and a consequent rising of his soul in arms against mankind. That one who had been on a sudden raised so high from an estate so low should fall foul of Fortune in terms apparently so unjustifiable, has excited surprise and censure; but having lived for a season "too much in the sun," nothing else could have been expected from one so tremulously sensitive when he found himself once more in his humble home, and at a distance from the excitement, and, may it be said? from the flattery, refined or more gross, seldom unacceptable, if given in sincerity and truth, to the poetic temperament. At all events he could not as yet settle down quietly to his ordinary pursuits, and it seems that he started from Mauchline on a Highland tour of which the particulars are not very fully known. Jenny Geddes was again his travelling companion. We find him at Inverary, where he composed a very unjust and injudicious epigram affecting the Duke of Argyle; next dancing at a Highland gentleman's hospitable mansion till three in the morning; thereafter plying the punch-bowl till six; and then spending the day on Loch Lomond, dining at Dumbarton, and running a mad race on Jenny Geddes, with a breekless Highlandman on a good horse, all the performers, horses and men, coming of course to grief.

He spent the month of July at Mossgiel. His fame procured him many friendships, and his society was much courted. Dugald Stewart met him twice, once in his own house at Catrine, where Burns was his guest, and again at a masonic lodge at Mauchline. From what fell under Stewart's observation now, despite the whispers that were busy with Burns's good name, he "should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety." It was also now that Burns wrote from Mossgiel that most interesting autobiographical letter to Dr Moore, so characteristic of him, and to which we have so often referred.

That he might have a final settlement with Creech, he returned to Edinburgh, arriving there on the 7th of August

He had also arranged to start on a Highland tour with Nicol of the High School, a man with many good qualities, yet withal so irascible that Burns compared himself "with such a *compagnon de voyage* to a man travelling with a loaded blunderbuss at full cock!" They left Edinburgh on Saturday, 25th of August 1787, and, as during the previous tour on the Border, Burns kept a diary. The travellers went by Linlithgow, Falkirk, Stirling, taking Carron Ironworks and Bannockburn by the way. Burns's feelings on the field of Bannockburn were wrought up to a high pitch of patriotism. He turned aside to visit Harvieston, in the valley of the Devon, where some relatives of Gavin Hamilton resided. Along with these he visited Caudron Linn, Rumbling Brig, and Deil's Mill. Nicol and the poet made good use of their time, and we soon find them at Dunkeld. Next day they hear Niel Gow play, and afterwards sup with the Duchess of Athole at Blair, where Josiah, afterwards Professor Walker, previously known to Burns, was residing in the capacity of tutor. Walker furnished Dr Currie with a very interesting account of the visit. It appears the ducal circle was enchanted with Burns's conversation. He seemed to apprehend at once his proper relation to his hosts, and charmed them much by drinking to the fine young family as "honest men and bonnie lasses." Nicol's waywardness prevented the poet from prolonging his stay, which was unfortunate in this respect, that Mr Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville, the great dispenser of Scottish patronage, was daily expected on a visit. As it was, however, he was fortunate in procuring the acquaintanceship of Mr Graham of Fintray, who eventually proved a valuable friend. To mark his sense of the kindness of his noble entertainers, he transmitted from Inverness, in a letter to Walker, "The humble petition of Bruar Water to the noble Duke of Athole." From Blair they went up the Garry, crossed the Spey, visiting as they proceeded the places of most remarkable interest, such as Castle Cawdor, "where Macbeth murdered King Duncan," Culloden Moor, Elgin Cathedral, and Gordon Castle, where Burns, calling by himself, was invited to dinner by his old acquaintance the duchess. As Nicol, however, had not

accompanied the poet, he rose to depart as soon as decency permitted, informing his hosts of his fellow-traveller's being in the village. Nicol was invited to the castle; but his blood was up at the fancied slight he had received, and Burns found himself under the necessity of immediately proceeding with the angry dominie, or of separating from him altogether, a thing not in consonance with his generous nature. To mark his sense of the kindness he had received, he composed a little poem, beginning, "Streams that glide in orient plains." He visited his paternal relations at Stonehaven and Montrose, and arrived again in Edinburgh on the 16th of September, having travelled 600 miles in twenty-two days.

He had intended to be at Dalswinton again in August, but had not been able to keep his appointment. Meanwhile he not only entered heart and soul into the task of aiding Johnson in getting up his Musical Museum, but endeavoured to enlist poets and musicians as fellow-workers with him—song-writers, like Skinner, author of "Tullochgorum," and, *per ambages*, the noble author of "Cauld Kail in Aberdeen." He again set out on a ten-days' tour. He visited his old friends at Harvieston, Sir William Murray of Ochtertyre, and Mr Ramsay of Ochtertyre (a different place near Stirling,) a gentleman well qualified, from somewhat of kindred genius, to sympathise with his guest, and, from his knowledge of the world, to give him judicious counsel, both as a poet and a man. His companion on this tour was a Dr Adair. He returned to Edinburgh on the 20th of October, ill with a cold contracted on his journey. He was detained in the capital apparently against his will, by a desire to obtain a final settlement with Creech, the most dilatory of mortals in drawing his purse; but had at last determined to leave it, for a time at least, early in December, when, having been overset by a drunken coachman, he was confined to his lodgings by a bruised knee. Now commenced his intimacy with Mrs M'Lehose, the Clarinda of those tawdry letters, so dear to inexperienced youths and maidens, but so revolting to every mature person of the least taste. He was again in a complication of miseries—hypochondria, remorse for past errors, doubts of Creech's

solvency, miseries only transiently relieved by Sylvander's tragic raptures for Clarinda. To crown all, Jean was once more soon to be a mother "yet nae wife," and her father had turned her out of doors, so that the poet, confined with his bruised limb, had to write to a friend to procure shelter for the hapless partner of his indiscretion. His ideas now fixed themselves on the excise as a means of sustaining life. He gave in an application, was examined by a supervisor and applied to Graham of Fintray and the Earl of Glencairn to forward his views. His mathematical training at Kirkoswald both suggested and qualified him for this new occupation.

While thus confined by his bruised limb, the second volume of Johnson's *Museum* was published, owing almost all its attractiveness both of poetry or music to Burns's personal exertions. He left Edinburgh on Monday the 18th of February, proceeding by Glasgow, Paisley, and Kilmarnock to Mossgiel. On the 25th he went to Dalswinton, taking with him a sagacious practical farmer, to aid him in coming to some definite resolution as to whether he should be a tenant of Mr Miller, and if so, as to what farm he should select From Cumnock he wrote hopefully to Clarinda about the farming project. This was on the 2d of March, and on the 5th Clarinda alludes in a letter to the approaching accouchement of Jean, and expresses sincere pity for that hapless young woman. Burns thought that Jean had no legal claims on him as a husband, and it is well known that Clarinda, in the fierce energy of her passion, wished him to bind himself to none in marriage, in the hope that circumstances might arise to allow of her own union with him. It appears, therefore, that Sylvander, Burns's Arcadian sobriquet in his correspondence with Mrs M'Lehose, as well as that passionate-hearted, ill-starred woman herself, would have hesitated little to throw poor Armour over altogether, the poet however taking care that Jean and her expected offspring should experience from his humanity that support and shelter which they might have looked for in vain from his shattered love Meanwhile Burns procured temporary shelter for her in T[illegible]

bolton, and afterwards had her removed to Mauchline. He so far reconciled the Armours to their erring daughter, that Mrs Armour attended Jean in her confinement. Again she presented "Rob Mossgiel" with twins, both daughters, who died a few days after their birth.

On the 13th of March he concluded a bargain with Mr Miller for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles above Dumfries. He had the choice of three farms, of which he chose the worst, because it was the most romantically situated. It was stony and impoverished, but it must be confessed that the landlord gave him an easy bargain. He had also a few days before accomplished two objects of importance to him—he had got a settlement with Creech, and had obtained an order from the Board of Excise for his instructions in the technicalities of the profession. These were to be imparted to him by an officer at Tarbolton, and it was desirable that they should be completed before the 25th of May, when he was to enter on his lease of Ellisland. He would have at this time about £400 in his pocket, and of this he advanced £180 to his brother Gilbert to enable him to struggle on with the cold soil of Mossgiel, and keep the family together in something like comfort.

In a letter to James Smith, Avon Printfield, Linlithgow, dated April 28, 1788, Burns first acknowledged his intention to make Jean "an honest woman." He had always had a warm affection for her, chilled naturally for a time by her own and her parents' conduct towards him; but cast as she now was upon his protection, his love was rekindled, being strongly fanned by his natural tenderness of heart.

He took up his residence at Ellisland on the 13th of June. He had to get a new *steading* built, and Jean and her child, one of the first twins, had to remain at Mauchline. To Mrs Dunlop he acknowledged his marriage, and his satisfaction with his choice. That he had done her justice reconciled himself to his better instincts. Providing a home by the banks of the Nith for the loved one not far from the banks of the Ayr, his conscience became calm, and his affections took eager flight to the quondam "Mauchline belle." It was while

animated by these feelings that he composed his famous song "Of a' the airts the wind can blaw," and the warm and luxuriant stanzas beginning, "Oh, were I on Parnassus' hill!"

On the 5th of August, Robert Burns and Jean Armour were formally declared husband and wife by the church. His new house not being ready so early as he had expected, he brought Mrs Burns to Dumfriesshire in the first week of December, having obtained temporary accommodation for her at a neighbouring farm. United to his wife and family, surrounded by a household-train, however humble, his feelings welled over in song, "I hae a wife o' my ain," &c.

It was not long, however, before he had reason to despair of succeeding as the farmer of Ellisland, and he took measures to obtain an appointment as an exciseman in his own district. He disclosed his views to Dr Moore, and in the midst of his despondency a flash of hope, characteristically enough, cheers him on; for, while hinting that an excise officer's position would be acceptable, he sees a supervisorship or surveyor-generalship looming in the future.

Ellisland was a pleasant spot, and in the neighbourhood were some very worthy men who cultivated the acquaintance of Burns. Among others, Captain Riddel of Glenriddel, and Mr M'Murdo, chamberlain to the Duke of Queensberry, and residing in Drumlanrig Castle. He would have been very happy here had fortune been more propitious. He exerted himself, in conjunction with Captain Riddel, to establish a parish library, perhaps among the first of such in Scotland. His feelings towards Creech had undergone a change, and he now corresponded with him in friendly terms, and supplied him, gratis, with copies of his more recent productions for a contemplated new edition. Ecclesiastical disputes still raging in the west, he wrote "The Kirk's Alarm," in behalf of Dr M'Gill of Ayr, whom he looked on as an injured honest man; but M'Gill having given in a document expressive of his regret for having disturbed the peace of the church, the storm of persecution was allayed.

Mrs Burns, now residing in the new house at Ellisland, having given birth to a son on the 18th of August 1789, the

poet, anticipating increased household expenditure, applied to Graham of Fintray to be appointed excise officer of the district in which he lived. Ellisland was to be converted into a dairy farm, managed principally by the females of the establishment, thus giving the poet time for attending to official duties.

Two bacchanalian productions of the highest merit, "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," and "The Whistle," were now written. It has been strenuously asserted that Burns was not present at the famous contest for the whistle, but it has been clearly established that he was, nor can any candid man, all circumstances considered, attach to him the slightest blame. He was as sober as a lark when the contest closed. Though now happy, most happy with his Jean, the vision of Mary Campbell sometimes floated before his mental vision, and at the close of an autumn day, three years after poor Mary's untimely death, he composed the verses, "To Mary in Heaven." He was appointed to the excise, but his district comprehended ten parishes, and neither his farming operations nor his poetic studies could prosper well with a man who had to ride on an average two hundred miles a week. He was, however, zealous and conscientious in the discharge of his official duties, and his over-exertion laid him on a sick bed. His diligence gratified his superiors to such a degree, that, when he had been only a twelvemonth in the service, his promotion to a supervisorship, it might have been of £200 a year, was contemplated. Old friends sometimes looked in on him, as Mr Ramsay of Ochtertyre and Robert Ainslie. Such days were to be marked by a white stone. In one day, at Ellisland, he composed what he himself deemed the best of his poems, "Tam o' Shanter," for Captain Grose's "Antiquities of Scotland." He wished Alloway Kirk to be delineated in that work, and Grose agreed to do so if the *ingenious* Mr Robert Burns should write for it a "pretty tale."

Burns was now falling into straitened circumstances. Ellisland was eating up the profits of his muse. Yet it never occurred to him to rhyme for anything but "fun." In spring 1791 he had stated to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham that but

for the excise he would have had to give up the farm Perhaps he was not a very good farmer. Such is the general and perhaps correct impression. He now only waited promotion to throw up the farm altogether. His hopes of a supervisorship were for the present blasted, but he received an appointment to Dumfries, with a salary of £70, which was £20 more than he had at Ellisland, and, besides, he was not required to keep a horse. Accordingly he left Ellisland, and quitting the freedom of the country for the smoky town, he settled down in a small house in the southern capital of Scotland, in the winter of 1791.

It is generally agreed that after settling in Dumfries his moral course was downward rather than otherwise; and if fame had been busy with his character before she had fairer scope now. Let it be owned once for all that there is some truth in this; at the same time, many of the tales circulated to his hurt were either lies or greatly exaggerated; nay, if carefully examined in the light of co-existing circumstances, in nowise discreditable to him. He was a man of too much mark to escape from the consequences of even the appearance of evil at the hands of those who lay in wait for his halting Your ordinary blockhead is of all men the dullest and most malignant; and a fellow-feeling of common danger leagued the dull into one against such a dissector of men's minds and motives, such a master of withering sarcasm and crucifying impromptu. Dumfries, like most Scottish towns of similar size and character even now, still more seventy-five years ago, contained a goodly proportion of men of comparatively easy circumstances who scarcely knew how to fill up the entire day. Their meridian, or twelve-hours' dram, their four o'clock dram, and a tumbler or two of toddy in the evening in their favourite *howff*, was a regular part of the business, at least of the routine, of every day. These men seldom got highly intoxicated, as may be understood from this having been a daily practice, and from their having been generally men in fair businesses. They were soakers, tipplers, their breath never free from the smell of whisky, fresh or stale, but drunkards they were not. Again, there were young doctors, lawyers, writers' clerks, who

could not so indulge during the day, but who preferred something more sprightly in their evening compotations. By both these classes a man like Burns, who, however, never indulged in the forenoon, was eagerly welcomed, illustrating their orgies by the splendour of his genius and renown, and bringing in his conversation, whether as sallies of wit, floods of broad merriment, outbursts of indefensible coarseness, or electric flashes of pathos drawing tears from every eye, a wealth of social stimulus that could not be found elsewhere. That he had not indulged much before he came to Dumfries is indisputably established. That a man whose clear income was £7 per annum, as his was at Lochlea and Mossgiel, who clothed himself respectably as became his station, and owed no man anything, could have been a drunkard, nay, could have been often within the walls of a public-house, is clear on the very face of it. Only on two suppositions could this have been the case. First, that Burns was a lounger hanging about inn doors at Torbolton or Mauchline, for a chance treat from any farmer or bagman, who might think the drink well earned by the brilliancy of the conversation; or, second, that he sorned on his rustic compeers. But Burns was a man of the most conscientious industry, and his highness of spirit would not brook to accept of anything from any man without paying his fair share of the lawin'. Auld Nanse Tinnock, the Mauchline hostel wife, who found herself and hostelrie suddenly rendered famous by the "Earnest Cry and Prayer," stoutly denied, and truthfully, that he had been wont to study politics in *her* house at least "over a glass of guid auld Scotch drink." And when he tells Lapraik,—

> "The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
> An' kirsen him wi' reekin' water;
> Syne we 'll sit down an' tak' our whitter,
> To cheer our heart,"

—it is well enough known that "the four-gill chap" was in the same category with the delicacies of the feast of Barmecide. How it fared with him in Edinburgh cannot be perfectly known. But charges of habitual or even frequent intoxica-

tion were never preferred, though a very considerable amount of free living might be pardoned him, when we consider the elevation to which he was so suddenly raised, the eagerness with which his company was sought after, the comparative idleness in which he found himself after a life of labour so severe, that he himself says it was "the unceasing moil of a galley-slave," a style of living that might be called in comparison luxurious, and a greater abundance of cash than he had ever before possessed. Yet, when about to leave Edinburgh, Dr Blair addressed to him a most friendly and affectionate letter, in which his having stood firm and calm and unseduced amid the dazzling circumstances by which he had been tried is particularly enlarged upon. At Ellisland we know his life was one of temperance and industry, and that he spoke the literal truth when he said that he had taken down his punch-bowl from its *dusty* corner on some particular occasion of merry-making. At all times he was apt to be intruded on, sometimes by shallow blockheads who were no mates for him, at other times by men of worth and standing, literary and social; and to both classes alike he was apt to give up his time and impair his means by a hearty and abundant hospitality. His was not the calculating head and the chill heart in hours of good-fellowship; in every hand that he clasped he owned the hand of a brother; and often must he have thrown his pearls before those who could not appreciate them, and neglected his true interests to gratify the laudable or vulgar, and therefore impertinent, curiosity of many who, whether fitted to appreciate or not the wondrous being with whom they had been brought into contact, robbed him, and through him posterity, of that which could not in any case so enrich them, as it made him and has made us poor indeed. The country gentry, too, for a season, were urgent for his presence at their tables. And whilst it must have been gratifying both to Burns and them, it was on the whole injurious. For it broke in upon his leisure, tended to produce, if it did not actually produce, dissatisfaction with the humble *ménage* at home, and put him altogether in a false position. He was the earthen pot sailing down the stream among the

brazen ones, and sure to come to grief; as the fable of the boys and frogs has it—"What is sport to you is death to us." Had these local magnates exerted themselves, as it is possible they might have done successfully, to have got promotion for him in his humble self-elected calling, and thereby have procured for him an income large enough to have kept his mind at ease with regard to his family, and for himself a prospect of greater leisure for poetical activity, something might be pardoned to their selfishness. If they had taken away much, it could have been said that they had given something, or had tried to give something, in return. But they threw aside the flower after they had extracted half its sweetness, and went on their way and made no sign.

It is said that when it was plain that farming Ellisland had proved a failure, and, from some political sentiments uttered, or misdemeanours or indiscretions acted, in Dumfries, his prospects in the excise were overclouded, or supposed to be so, his conduct was less circumspect than usual. If such were the case, do we not see similar results every day? Sorrow is proverbially thirsty; and if, from a regard to human frailty, we condone ordinary mortals for losing heart when fortune frowns, how much more ought we to pardon a being so impressionable as a poet, and that poet Burns! But is it true that Burns so demeaned himself in actual or dreaded misfortune? And is it true, and if so, how true, that Burns by his political sins brought himself under the chastisement or reproof of his superiors? To answer this it will be necessary to glance at the state of politics in Great Britain and France at the period under review.

The French Revolution of 1789 did not immediately affect the sentiments and expressions of Burns, so far as can be learned from his writings; but most men of ardent temperament and liberal opinions watched eagerly for the results of an experiment that was to introduce liberty, fraternity, and equality among men. The position of the unfortunate Louis was viewed with alarm by all dynasties, and by the governing classes generally, as something that boded no good to their order. The British Government and its functionaries, high

and low, were naturally on the alert to prevent the spread of those dangerous doctrines which had in their eyes proved so fatal to the cause of order. Burns had a half-sentimental Jacobitism, which had already subjected him to suspicion from the indiscreet publicity he had given it in the unfortunate verses written on an inn window at Stirling. At a period of alarm and suspicion, this would readily be remembered; and, from his fame as a poet, and his position as a servant of the Government, his conduct would be narrowly observed. At a moment of public alarm a race of vile informers finds encouragement and reward from the representatives of power; and men, otherwise highminded and honourable, in the panic of the hour became merciless, uncharitable, and intolerant of everything like independent thought and action. The latent Jacobitism of Scotland came to the surface as a sort of half-Jacobinism, merely because it was known to be distasteful to the reigning family. Burns, not only as a quasi-Jacobite, but in common with a large proportion of the most enlightened and thoughtful of his fellow-subjects generally, expressed himself more freely, in the way of sympathy with the French patriots, than was discreet in one in his position. Hence many eyes were turned upon him with watchful spite; and the disaffected gauger, if his conduct were out of joint, or his circumstances embarrassed, would find neither generous criticism nor brotherly sympathy. As matters grew more serious in France, the most of those who at first had hailed the Revolution as the inauguration of a millennium of liberty were compelled to withdraw their sympathies, and to cling with increased fondness to the constitutional form of government established here. Dumfries was a Tory town, and political feeling is generally rancorous in direct proportion to its distance from the centre of power. Burns was a Whig; and the chief men who had patronised him in Edinburgh, and the squires whom he mixed with oftenest in Dumfriesshire, as well as his superiors in the excise there, were of the same political creed. That he was a Whig, and the man of greatest mark in the town, made him particularly obnoxious to the Tory gentlemen, especially as there was a suspicion that he

vas a turncoat, and had held different opinions before he had fallen in Whiggish hands." A distich applied to Burns has been preserved by Sir Walter Scott:—

> "A Whig, I guess, but Rab 's a Tory,
> And gi'es us mony a funny story."

Whether this be true or not, it is certain that for some time Burns was a marked man. In so small a place he could not but know this; and it is not difficult to imagine that a man of such haughtiness of spirit could ill brook the scorn or insolence of any, of whatever rank; and that he would, from the vivacity of his temperament, unconsciously even play into his enemies' hands. His obnoxious political sentiments, and his stubborn pride of character—not formed to conciliate those whom he deemed treating him unworthily—had doubtless a great instrumentality in originating those tales to his discredit, which, like all doubtful stories about the eminent ever find too ready credence.

The affair of the four carronades sent by him to the French Convention, along with a letter expressive of his sympathy with their exertions in the cause of liberty, has had perhaps in some quarters undue importance attached to it. The Solway Firth, from its proximity to and easiness of access from the Isle of Man, was much frequented by smuggling craft, and, on the Scottish side especially, there dwelt a race of most daring and unscrupulous smugglers. That contraband operations of almost incredible magnitude were here systematised and regularly carried on, is familiar to every reader of "Redgauntlet." On February 27th, 1792, a suspicious-looking craft was discovered in the Firth, and Burns, with others, was set to watch her movements. Next day she stranded, and, it being discovered that her crew were numerous, well armed, and likely not to yield without formidable resistance, two officers were despatched in different directions for troops. On their arrival, Burns, putting himself at their head, entered the water sword in hand, and boarded the ship, when the crew, losing heart, submitted without a struggle. Here, as in all his professional requirements, he exhibited

himself a brave and zealous officer. The vessel, with all her stores and arms, was sold at Dumfries; and Burns, purchasing four carronades for L.3, sent them, with a letter as above mentioned, to the French Convention.

Mr Chambers, by a careful examination of dates, has shown that when the guns were bought, no such body as the French Convention existed. This, however, matters little; whether they were sent to the Convention or the Legislative Assembly, it was an extraordinary and uncalled-for act for a British citizen, and a servant of the Government, so far to step out of his way as to send munitions of war to a Government viewed by his own with uneasy, if not exactly with hostile, feelings. The sentiments of the royal family were also known to be unfavourable to the French Government, and its emissary, M. de Perigord, had even then been publicly slighted at a levee by the Queen. The guns and letter were stopped at Dover; and it must have been regarded as a very eccentric action in an excise officer, personally to address a foreign Government, and furnish it with material aid, which might be used some time against either Britain or its allies. The whole transaction, however, regard it as we may, was done deliberately, from no hasty impulse, and under no unusual excitement. It was, we think, very indiscreet; and, though not visited with formal censure from his superiors, would not elevate him in their estimation, nor, at a season of political excitement, be otherwise than detrimental to his chances of promotion.

Matters in France were proceeding rapidly to a crisis. The blood spilt in torrents by the fierce democracy, the establishment of a republic, and the dissemination of revolutionary ideas in other countries—particularly the formation in this country of political societies named "Friends of the People"—were viewed by those in power, and by the majority of all classes, as endangering the peace of society. At such a time Burns ought to have been more than usually circumspect, and, looking at contemporary events in the light of his connection with the Government, to have said or done nothing to embarrass the powers that were, or to draw upon himself

misconstruction and obloquy ; yet, such was the strength of his feelings and the vivacity of his temperament, that he boldly gave utterance to his sympathy with the French, and to his dissatisfaction with the British Government for its hostile attitude towards the republicans, and its refusal to grant the reforms insisted on by the "Friends of the People," and even by the more cautious Whigs. In ordinary conversation, but above all in animated discussion, he gave vent to his sentiments with a force and fearlessness that made moderate men shrink from him in alarm. Thus, at a private dinner party he refused to drink the health of Pitt, he being meanwhile a servant of Pitt's Government, and proposed instead the health of Washington. Now, apart from the consideration of the claims of these two distinguished men to precedence, it was surely most ill-judged in Burns to demur to pledge the health of Pitt. The great officers of the Crown are accustomed to be toasted at all kinds of meetings, and by men of all political opinions. But it was an unguarded, though doubtless an obstinate, assertion of his sympathies with republicanism. Two other stories of similar tendency may be here mentioned, though they may not have occurred exactly at this time Entering the Dumfries theatre one night while the National Anthem was being played, the poet, who was somewhat intoxicated, refused to uncover, and called for *Ça ira*. The anecdote is in its essentials confirmed by two independent witnesses. A call was made by the audience for his expulsion, which subsided on his doffing his hat. Such an act seems, to use the phraseology of Calvinism, to savour of "judicial blindness." On another occasion, at an after-dinner drinking-bout, he proposed the toast—"*May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause.*" An officer present, a Captain ——, took offence at it, and, as bearing his Majesty's commission—which Burns also did, though he seems to have forgotten it—took exception to it, doubtless less from what was said than from what was implied, and a discreditable brawl ensued, which, according to the usual code of honour in those days ought to have resulted in a hostile meeting. Burns, next morning, wrote a very humble letter

to his host, explaining and attempting—it must be confessed, unsuccessfully—to defend the obnoxious toast. It was, he said, "a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to." This was begging the question. Words, in themselves harmless, become at certain conjunctures "flat blasphemy;" and none knew this better than Burns. But, in the cases we have mentioned, there can be no doubt that the wine had stolen away, not the wise man's brains, but his caution, and that, while under its influence, he gave expression to sentiments which he would have carefully repressed while sober—some of which, in a state of sobriety, would never have occurred to him, nay, never would have shaped themselves in his mind as distinct propositions. But the bowl which elevated him for a while into the most enchanting of table companions, gradually gave, as Horace says, "horns to the poor man." Fluent of discourse, quick of apprehension, fertile in illustration; argument, sarcasm, joke, pathos—the whole armoury of successful conversational display flooding his ideas in resistless stream—would make him, as the wine flowed, and

"The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,"

occasionally one of the most obstinate and headstrong of men. It is heartrending to read the almost abject letter in which he excuses himself for not having proceeded to fatal arbitrament on account of his wife and children, and pleads with his host to get the story suppressed, as its publication might bring him under the censure of his superiors in the Excise. No doubt, however, can be entertained that these unpleasantnesses all owed their origin to the "Social Bowl."

Some malicious, or *loyal*, person had brought these or similar proceedings under the notice of the Board of Excise, and Mr Mitchell, the collector, was instructed to inquire into his political conduct, as being a person blamed for disaffection to the Government. Burns was thrown into a state of great alarm, as may be seen from his letters to Mr Graham and Mrs Dunlop, of December 1792, and the following Janu-

ary. It was even rumoured that he had been dismissed from the Excise, as we learn from his own letter to Mr Erskine of Mar, in which a history of the transaction, and of his defence, as well as an exposition of his political creed are given *in extenso*. It is clear that the defence would be nearly as unpalatable to the Board as the offence. Burns evidently made more of the matter than the circumstances warranted. He was cautioned to be more circumspect; and as a Government official he ought not to have been surprised at this, but rather that his political delinquences were treated so leniently. It may be easily imagined that a *mere* gauger would not have been allowed to slip so easily; and that for such neither Mr Graham nor Mr Corbet would have stood his steady friends. That he was told to *act*, and not to *think*, if it ever *was* said, was simply impertinent; and to be *silent* and *obedient*, whatever might be men or measures, though, as Fluellen says, "prave 'ords," must have commended themselves to Burns himself as the only proper course for him so long as he chose to remain a servant of the Government.

This caution preyed on his sensitive mind, and made him fear for promotion in his calling. It is a peculiarity of the meaner class of animals to assail one who has been wounded; and ignoble men seem to consider it a duty to keep down a brother who has fallen. Just in proportion as they worship the rising sun do they heap up their blasphemies against the luminary in his decline. Besides, many worthy God-fearing persons, aware of the freedom of speech, and taught to suspect a corresponding looseness of conduct, in our poet, as well as many sensible and respectable Tories who otherwise would have been proud of his intimacy, but were shocked by his political backslidings, kept aloof from him. In a small, gossiping, aristocratic town like Dumfries this was singularly unfortunate for Burns, because no man would suffer more acutely at being *tabooed* in society. He had not that thorough absorption in his poetical calling that would make him feel poetry to be its own exceeding great reward. He *must* have the sympathies and kind regards of his fellow-men; and though he might sing—

"Who does me disdain,
I will scorn them again,"

the averted looks and cold shoulders of his fellow-citizens must have furnished him with exquisite misery. Mr Lockhart records an anecdote furnished to him by David Macculloch, son of the laird of Ardwall:—"He was seldom more grieved than when, riding into Dumfries one fine summer's evening to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said, 'Nay, nay, my young friend—that's all over now;' and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad,—

"'His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsel' dowie upon the corn-bing.

"'Oh were we young, as we ance hae been,
We suld hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it ower the lilywhite lea,
And werena my heart light I wad die.'"

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably till the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potation, and Bonnie Jean's singing of some verses which he had recently composed."

We see him here in two very opposite phases of his character, which, on other occasions also, alternated with almost inexplicable rapidity, like the tears and smiles of an April morn.

One thing is certain, that in the performance of his official duties he was conscientious and punctual to a degree of jea-

lousy. As an officer his conduct was praiseworthy, and never were his duties performed in any but the most rigid spirit of fidelity. The least appearance of remissness was explained and defended with punctilious warmth. And this tallies with the general *sense* of duty which never forsook him under any circumstances, and which, when his conduct happened to deflect from the exact circle of propriety, filled him with such vehement remorse. His constitutional melancholy, his large social susceptibilities, his sorrows, his somewhat incongruous circumstances, his falling on evil tongues and evil times, made him apt to snatch an hour from reflection, and drown amid the joviality of the festive board the meaner cares of his ill-assorted life. And yet these cares sprang chiefly from himself. Had he accepted his position in a spirit of faith, and hope, and cheerfulness, talked less of independence, and leant more on himself, cultivating and maturing the spirit of divine harmony with which he had been so largely gifted, his soul might have got into tune, and, instead of his life alternating between paroxysms of wild joy and overmastering gloom, it might have flowed on musically like a "rejoicing stream."

Burns was really as little of a Jacobin at heart as he was of a Jacobite. Though he did express sympathy with the patriots, and rejoiced over the capture of the Bastile, yet when France assumed an attitude hostile to Britain, his patriotism was in a glow at once. And his patriotism had been from his earliest years one of the strongest sentiments of his heart, not a sentiment so much as a passion. For Scotland with her old historic, heroic memories, in the first place, and as a poet; and for the empire, of which she was an integrant part, with its world-wide possessions and interests, in the second place, and as a man and citizen, his heart ever beat with the most generous devotion. It is one thing to discuss political questions and possible reforms, and to regard with interest and admiration the efforts of an enslaved people to shake off the yoke of despotism, or free themselves from the oppression of an insolent aristocracy; but should that same people, in the intoxication of success, threaten to

pollute the soil of a free nation by making a descent on its shores for any purpose whatever, then the soul of every patriot is up in arms, and the feelings which animated Burns when he composed that noble war-song, "Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?" pervade millions of bosoms, though none but the *one* Tyrtæus of his people could shape them into such an inspiring and defiant war-cry. Burns was one of the battalion of volunteers raised in Dumfries, as others were elsewhere over the United Kingdom, to repel, if need were, any hostile attack of "haughty Gaul." And, though some of the *respectables*, God help them! objected to the enrolment of the bard, he soon became the most popular man in the battalion, and voluntarily became their poet-laureate.

The "Dumfries Volunteers" and the "Poor and Honest Sodger" then rose at once to the highest popularity. All classes sang them with enthusiasm, and there can be little doubt that they added many a brave soldier to the ranks of the British army, by investing with the finest human interest the career of a humble warrior, and lifting the public imagination above the familiar conception of the ranks of the army being recruited chiefly from the lowest and most degraded of the populace. And herein surely Burns deserved well of his country, well especially of its Government. That your Saltmarket or Canongate losel will fight well has been proved on many a bloody field. That the army is the best school he could enter to acquire habits of self-command and order, obedience to lawful authority, and many other minor morals, is nowise difficult to understand and acknowledge. But that he should be brought into contact with steady intelligent men of his own order, who love their profession, and study its details that they may obtain promotion; who set him an example of voluntary sobriety, subordination, pursuit of knowledge, and a faithful observance of the decencies of life; and all the better if they are men, as many common soldiers we hope and believe are, of genuine piety, then not only is his chance of reformation greater, but the credit of the whole service is enhanced, and the character of soldier is not associated, as in many minds it still is,

with whatever is most dissolute and godless. Burns's song produced on the public mind generally, and fortunately on the minds of many young men in town and country of excellent character and good education, and who had been brought up in honest households, an impression that the army was not the last resource of scapegraces, but a field from which by faithful discharge of duty might be reaped honourable independence and possible promotion. "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled" and the "Song of Death" tend to promote patriotism, and a contempt of death in freedom's cause, inspiring the finest martial enthusiasm, admirably adapted to the genius of our people, which is *martial*, not *military*, that prompts with stern resolve to repel aggression or support outraged weakness, but has no thirst for war or its triumphs as such. Its motto is "Defence." With the exception of Dibdin, whose services to the navy by his excellent sailor-songs were acknowledged by a handsome pension, no poet of the time,—and to name Dibdin as a poet in the same breath with Burns is "very tolerable and not to be endured,"—did anything to keep alive the national spirit. And yet these services were never acknowledged. Burns, it is certain, never looked for acknowledgment, never imagined he had done anything more meritorious than the most prosaic volunteer who appeared on parade, both having done *what they could;* yet, devoting his rare, his matchless gift of song to the service of his country, had his country's rulers bestowed on him the merest recognition, though it had cost the imperial treasury no single coin, it would have thrilled his generous soul to its centre with grateful delight. Had they given or promised promotion in the Excise, how, from no spirit of flunkeyism, but from the native promptings of the warmest and least exacting yet most independent heart then beating, would his gratitude have overflowed in gushing melody; and, as he mourned for Glencairn, who had done nothing for him beyond the commonest courtesies of a kindly nature, and getting the members of the Caledonian Hunt to subscribe for guinea copies of his second edition,—as he mourned for him as mother for child, as bridegroom for newly-wedded bride, so

the raptures of his heartfelt joy would have been boundless: and many a sad pang would have been spared to him, many a gloomy foreboding warded off, and his later years, instead of showing life to him as a bare heath without bloom, might have presented it as a not unlovely garden. And whatever may be said or thought of his dissipation, this much is clear, that not when skies are bright and seas are calm, but when they are livid with storms and the waves run high, does the poetic temperament resort to the bowl to deaden thought, "and steep the senses in forgetfulness."

After all, what was the amount of dissipation with which he could be charged? His political heresies, we believe, mainly caused it to be noticed, and, of course, to be exaggerated. He was not more addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors than many of the most respectable civic functionaries, and even grave elders of the church. And for him, in respect to this, and, it may be, other indiscretions, a strong palliation may be found in his temperament, and in the temptations to which he, more than others, was exposed. Among these was the frequent seizure and confiscation of rum or other spirits, which fell to the lot of the revenue officers; and a man of the generous and hospitable disposition of our bard would always be too ready, in the after-part of the day, in his own house, to play the host; and thus, from an abuse of one of the finest feelings of our nature, he was wont to expose himself to unnecessary and hurtful indulgence. If other shortcomings can be charged against him, we should remember that they must have been rare, and sorrowed over with an anguish of repentance almost inconceivable—as the party sinned against was the first to forgive, and during the remainder of her life cherished for his memory the most sincere affection and admiration. And we should not forget that he died when he was comparatively young, when in many men the fever of the blood has not been cooled; and that, when passion had subsided, the remainder of his life might have flowed on in calmness, had he been preserved to the world. Allan Cunningham, than whom no man had a more tender regard for Burns's reputation, has, we think, been guilty of an

error in judgment, in insinuating that too close an intimacy existed between him and some of the heroines of his later songs. He should either have been more circumstantial, or been silent altogether. Professor Walker hints something of the same kind, but he is a very grave offender with regard to Burns's later years, and has come under a most truculent but not altogether undeserved castigation from Professor Wilson. In fact, Heron, Currie, and Walker have been too free in giving circulation to popular gossip, and to the whispers and inuendoes of rumour, always to be distrusted in the case of any man of more than usual mark who has recently died. And this, at a time when the poet's exemplary wife and young family, as well as his most respectable brother and mother, could not fail to know and suffer from such gratuitous publicity given to private shortcomings, on the supposition even that what they published was the unvarnished truth. That Burns was a gauger, and had been a ploughman, and that therefore, as one of the *plebs*, his reputation might be discussed in a spirit of freedom and plain-speaking that would not have been readily thought of in the case of an individual of higher social standing, whose dearest and nearest relatives must necessarily have been cognisant of everything published affecting his memory, is the excuse now made for his early biographers. It is a lame one, but in the case of Currie we are willing to allow it as he proved himself the most devoted and least selfish friend of all that took an interest in the poet's family. His sins of commission proceeded from no foolish notion of his own superiority, nor does he ever speak in the same patronising spirit of condescension which is so offensive in Professor Walker; but he had not realised that Burns was no vulgar prodigy, but a poet of a great and original genius, who was not merely to slip into a humble niche in the temple of poesy, under shelter of his ploughman's plaid, but into the most conspicuous one allotted to his century, and with all a poet's singing robes about him. Mr Carlyle puts the case very graphically thus.—"Dr Currie and Mr Walker have both, we think, mistaken one essentially important thing: their own and the world's true relation to their author, and the style in which it became

such men to think and to speak of such a man. Dr Currie loved the poet truly—more perhaps than he avowed to his readers, or even to himself—yet he everywhere introduces him with a certain patronising, apologetic air, as if the polite public might think it strange and half unwarrantable that he, a man of science, a scholar, and gentleman, should do such honour to a rustic. In all this, however, we readily admit that his fault was not want of love, but weakness of faith, and regret that the first and kindest of all our poet's biographers should not have seen farther, or believed more boldly what he saw. Mr Walker offends more deeply in the same kind," &c.

Towards the close of his life, Miss Aiken, daughter of his early Ayr patron, encountered him on the streets of Dumfries ; he was gaunt and thin, and exhibited all the marks of ill-health. She insisted that he should go home and get ready for dinner in the house of the friend with whom she was staying, one of the aristocracy of the town. Captain Hamilton, his landlord, also was urgent for a renewal of the intimacy which had formerly existed between them, but which had latterly fallen off somewhat. Some of the country gentlemen and their wives, ladies of the highest culture and delicacy, and such persons of respectability as Gray the teacher, Findlater the supervisor, and Mr Syme of Ryedale, were his warm friends to the last. So that we may believe that the stories to his discredit were greatly exaggerated, else, in so circumscribed a community, these persons would have fallen away from him as from a leper. The only class that as a body and to a man abjured intimacy with him were the local clergy. This is not to be wondered at, nor taken as a proof, in the absence of other proof, that his society was generally shunned, or deserving to be shunned. In provincial towns in Scotland, and perhaps elsewhere, the local clergy are in a very painful position. As a rule, their fellowship is restricted to the straitest professors of their own congregation. A set of old ladies of unimpeachable orthodoxy and spotless decorum, possessed of the narrowest sympathies, and a few old men of analogous character, supplemented by a sprinkling of juniors, male and female, do all the active part of the congregational

work; and to intercourse with these the clergyman for the most part restricts himself. Rarely is he on cordial terms with the members of another denomination. Now, the last man that can be imagined likely to have engaged the sympathies of the Dumfries clergy was the swashbuckler and fighting-man of the New Lights, the author of "The Kirk's Alarm," "The Ordination," "Holy Willie's Prayer and Epitaph," and "The Holy Fair." A terror of originality and independent thought has ever been the besetting sin of ordinary clergymen; and while Dr Blacklock and Dr Blair and Professor Dugald Stewart would have hailed the poet with the most unaffected cordiality, being themselves superior to misconstruction, and not afraid of manly independence, these Dumfries ministers durst not have associated with the poet at a less price than the favour of "the unco guid or rigidly righteous." And it is lamentable that they should have paid so dear for what was worth so little. Surely if they had been zealous to pluck a brand from the burning, here was a noble opportunity. In the exercise of their sacred functions no inhabitant of the burgh had a prior claim on them; and, to a priest who feared not the face of man, the guiding of the feet of the author of "The Cotter's Saturday Night" into the way of peace should have been a prime consideration.

We know that his official duties were always punctually discharged. We know that he attended to the education of his children with a degree of care and attention rare in any rank of life, even among men of the most exemplary sobriety. We know now, further, that when it was supposed, falsely and to his hurt, that he had hung his harp on the willows, he was writing the finest songs to be found in any language, restoring others, collecting and writing remarks on Scottish song, corresponding with Mr Thomson and many more. In fact, scarcely a day can have passed in which, in addition to his arduous duties as an officer of the Government, he did not throw off as much original composition, prose or verse, as many professed authors have been accustomed to do, who have given themselves entirely to literature. And it was his ignorance of this latter fact in particular that kept his brother

Gilbert so long from vindicating the poet's memory from the charges brought against it so unjustly, but in such good faith, by Dr Currie, otherwise so kind and generous. And to vindicate in this way the good name of Burns required great moral courage on the part of Gilbert, as it subjected him to the suspicion of having come to the defence too late, and from some selfish motive; and it actually drew down upon him an indignant rejoinder from Mr Roscoe, Dr Currie's friend. Yet he succeeded in removing at least a part of that obloquy which attached too long to the poet's reputation.

Burns's songs are by many reckoned the best of all his compositions. The inspiration is purer, and the felicities of expression more curious, if that be possible, than in his other productions. The greater proportion of them deals with the tender passion; and no poet of ancient or modern times has treated of it with so much variety of illustration and sentiment, with so much warmth, and, on the whole, with so much purity. We admit partly Lord Jeffrey's objection that he exhibits no chivalry in his portraiture of the passion; that he never approaches the beloved object in a spirit of deferential respect, but always, even when the "dear idea" is not that of some nut-brown rustic maiden, but of some high-born beauty, places himself on a footing of perfect equality, and strains her to his daring and impassioned breast. This we may attribute partly to the humility of his origin; but also, and in greater part, to the perfect loyalty and unrestrained impetuosity of his feelings. "One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin;" and in certain circumstances, and with certain individuals, there is no such leveller as the tender passion when it exists in purity and unrestrained strength. There is a delicacy of feeling, a refinement of passion and expression in his best love songs, which makes us forget their tone of fearless familiarity, and sometimes a subtlety which surprises like the perfume of a rose that blushes unseen—

> "Yestreen when to the trembling string
> The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
> To thee my fancy took its wing,
> I sat, but neither heard nor saw.

Though this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
'Ye are na Mary Morison.'"

In some of his songs the warmth expands into indelicacy, but always without insidiousness. No poison is ministered in secret to the tender imagination, disguised in sweets. Nothing like the prurience of Mr Thomas Little is to be found in the direct manly strains of the Ayrshire Poet. Even in those daring stanzas which bear the impress of Burns's misdirected powers, which we, in common with many, have come across in the course of our inquiries, but which were never intended for publication, no healthy mind would find much that could injure, thus testifying to the native nobility and directness of his character.

To show with what skill he could seize upon a line or two of a song that was floating up and down the country, and complete it in the spirit of the original, we subjoin the following "splendid lyric," as Mr Lockhart justly designates it :—

"Go fetch to me a pint of wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie;
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith,
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the Ferry
The ship rides by the Berwick Law,
And I maun leave my bonnie Mary.

"The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rankèd ready
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it 's not the roar o' sea or shore,
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shouts o' war that 's heard afar—
It 's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary."

One verse more from his love songs—

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

Byron uses this stanza as the motto to "The Bride of Abydos." Scott says it contains the essence of a thousand love tales. And Mrs Jameson says these lines are in themselves a complete romance. "They are the alpha and omega of feeling, and contain the essence of an existence of pain and pleasure distilled into one burning drop."

Three other classes of songs have been produced by him in equal perfection—First, Domestic Songs, of which "John Anderson my Jo, John," is the finest specimen. Second, Bacchanalian Songs, represented best by "Willie brewed a peck o' maut," and illustrated by the "Earnest Prayer and Cry," and "Scotch Drink." These are by no means coarse, as some dull fools suppose. They breathe the finest and most ethereal spirit of Bacchus, matched only by some of the exquisite lyrics of the Elizabethan era, and infinitely raised above the emanations of Anacreon's muse by superior vigour and by a rare sense of humour. We never think of Anacreon but as an old debauchee, unredeemed by a single unselfish trait. Beyond the solacements of Venus and Bacchus he seems never to have had an aspiration. And, third, War Songs, as "The Song of Death" and "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." Most people recollect Mr Syme's account of the circumstances under which the last was composed. Burns and he were riding over the hills of Galloway amid the sublimities of a thunder storm. It is, by acclamation, the best war-ode ever written. In it he rivals Tyrtaeus. The same steady gazing upon and contempt of death, the same stern patriotism, and the same disregard of the horrors of a "foughten field."

From his earliest years he had studied song-writing as a craft. He had in the course of his ramblings over Scotland visited the scene of every remarkable song except Lochaber and the Braes of Bellenden. And his earliest poetic and patriotic desire was that for poor auld Scotland's sake he

"might sing a sang at least." Hence his enthusiasm in everything pertaining to Scottish song, and his generous offer of assistance to Johnson in getting up the "Scots Musical Museum." From his first letter to Johnson, in May 1787, to his last, in July 1797, he never ceased to take a lively interest in that work. In the department of Scottish poetry he was virtually the editor, though an unpaid one. Among Johnson's papers Cromek saw no fewer than 184 of the pieces which compose the collection written out in Burns's own hand. Thus for upwards of ten years he busied himself about a work for which all the remuneration he asked or expected was a copy now and then for a friend. "I am ashamed," he writes to Johnson, not much more than a fortnight before his death, "to ask another favour of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present the 'Scots Musical Museum.' If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first *fly*, as I am anxious to have it soon."

A much more ambitious undertaking in the same line was projected by George Thomson, clerk to the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Manufactures in Scotland. He was assisted by some musical amateurs in Edinburgh, and among them by the Honourable Andrew Erskine. It was resolved to solicit the co-operation of Burns, and Thomson wrote to him in September 1792. In his letter the terms of the engagement are explicitly stated; and as much controversy has arisen on this subject, it is well to note the following sentences:—"We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any *reasonable* price you shall please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication." Burns agreed, with an enthusiasm that might have been anticipated, to embark with them in an undertaking that jumped so exactly with his predilections, and gratified his most cherished patriotic longings. He wrote:—"As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the

one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c., would be downright prostitution of soul!" Mr Thomson's offer of remuneration was extremely guarded; Burns's rejection of it was explicit and peremptory. The undertaking would be expensive, and might prove a failure, and Thomson was not then in much better circumstances than Burns. Besides, the affairs of the poet wore a promising aspect, and no immediate need of money pressed. In the ordinary affairs of life, his views were much more business-like than is usually supposed; but in so congenial a task as song-writing, and for a work with whose projectors "profit was quite a secondary consideration," it was clearly impossible for him to be influenced by pecuniary motives.

In a letter to the Rev. P. Carfrae he had said—"The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever." And he had printed the Kilmarnock edition of his poems to raise a sum of money to pay his passage out of the country. He had, further, realised about £600 from the Edinburgh edition, printed by Creech. His only motive, then, in assisting Johnson and Thomson so efficiently for nothing with songs whose equals could not have been purchased anywhere for money was, not a belief in the impropriety of an author's living by the productions of his brain, but solely a high sense of patriotism, and of boundless pleasure in the work itself. Towards the close of his life his circumstances, from the increase of his family, and from the pressure on British commerce from the war with France, were considerably more straitened than they had been in Ellisland. He was sometimes obliged to borrow small sums, which, however, he punctually repaid; and sometimes his accounts with his landlord and his drapers, for instance, were allowed to stand over longer than would have been expected from a man of his punctilious independence had payment been easy for him. That he never, therefore, bethought himself of adding to his income by the publication of his later productions, shows the generous spirit in which they were composed. The too generous, the unjustly generous spirit—for no more sacred

obligation than the comfortable upbringing of a family, and securing the peace and self-respect which freedom from petty cares for paltry sums tends to produce, is incumbent on a parent. It does seem strange that he would rather stoop to *borrow* where he could so easily have commanded money by his own honourable exertions. Nobility of spirit endures no severer test than the pressure of poverty. And that Burns would not write songs for money, that he refused £50 a year from a London newspaper for occasional poems, and that he rejected with scorn the offer from a miscreant of a large sum for the looser productions of his pen, and for the pieces of kindred spirit that his love for the Scottish muse, even when higher kilted than decorum warranted, had prompted him to collect and commit to writing, all tend to prove his naturally high-toned character.

And yet no man was more alive to the pleasures that money could purchase, or to the respect that the possession of it generally secures. His Edinburgh life, and his intercourse with the local aristocracy, showed him persons in the enjoyment of all the material comforts and *agrémens* of life, of whose understanding and character he thought meanly. And herein lay the great mistake of his life—that he hankered after and enjoyed with exquisite keenness the pleasures that wealth could procure, and yet chose to act otherwise than the accumulation of wealth demands. Between poesy and worldly success he could never fairly decide. When his pride met with a rebuff he merely talked of his independence, and forgot in the next social circle the wounds under which he had lately smarted. And yet had he brought his poetical talents into market he could have secured worldly independence, and along with it self-respect and the respect of others. However, to use the words of Carlyle, "not as a hired soldier, but as a patriot, would he strive for the glory of his country; so he cast from him the poor sixpence a day, and served zealously as a volunteer. Let us not grudge him this last luxury of his existence; let him not have appealed to us in vain! The money was not necessary to him; he struggled through without it; long since, these guineas would have been gone, and

now the high-mindedness of refusing them will plead for him in all hearts for ever."

After Burns had been contributing to Thomson's work for nine months, that gentleman wrote to him that the undertaking was now entirely on his own responsibility, the gentlemen who had agreed to join him in the speculation having requested to be let off. He goes on—"But thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done. As I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to enclose a small mark of my gratitude, [Five Pounds] and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by heaven! if you do, our correspondence is at an end." To this Burns's answer was extraordinary. "I assure you that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. *It degrades me in my own eyes.* However, to return it would savour of affectation; but, as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear, by that HONOUR which crowns the upright statue of ROBERT BURNS'S INTEGRITY, on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the bypast transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you!" What renders this the more wonderful is, that we have convincing proof that at this very time the possession of a few pounds would have been of great service to him; and that, in fact, he had to borrow, and with a feeling of shame, and a confession and explanation of poverty, from a gentleman under no obligation to assist him. Thomson, however, did continue occasionally to remunerate him in the way he thought least likely to offend, as by making Mrs Burns the present of a shawl, and the poet himself that of a drawing by Allan from the "Cotter's Saturday Night;" while he was not niggardly in furnishing him with copies of the first half-volume of the "Melodies"—all that was published in his lifetime.

Ill health, and increasing pecuniary difficulties, magnified, doubtless, by his depressed spirits and gloomy imagination, at last, shortly before his death, made him apply, in a letter written under great excitement, to Thomson for five pounds; not, however, as a gift, which under any circumstances it

could not have been, but as beforehand payment of work to be furnished for the "Melodies." "After all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel scoundrel of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song-genius you have seen." Thomson's reply is as follows:—"Ever since I received your melancholy letters by Mrs Hyslop [three months before, let the reader remember] I have been ruminating in what manner I could alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake!" This is all that passed between Burns and Thomson on this subject. After the poet's death Thomson was blamed in different quarters for having acted shabbily to him and his family, and he attempted several not very satisfactory defences. Had he spoken the truth manfully, and confessed himself to have been in straitened circumstances, as is well known that he was when Burns wrote that last affecting letter; that in fact, the five pounds he sent so promptly had first to be *borrowed*, he would have come out of the controversy more honourably than he has done.

Professor Walker, whom we consider a pompous prig, came to his defence. When he talks of "the delicate mind of Mr Thomson," we cannot forget how far he had outraged common decency in his account of his last interview with Burns, and must infer that he thought Mrs Burns the gauger's widow and the gauger's other relatives, to have been, one and all,

without that superfine article "a delicate mind." The letter he quotes from Lord Woodhouselee shows only that "that highly respectable gentleman and accomplished writer" knew nothing whatever of the true state of the case. That Burns was as much indebted to Thomson for his good counsels and active friendship as a man, as for his strictures as a critic, are equally true; for his criticisms were generally rejected, his active friendship was confined to giving him £10 and a trumpery shawl for a collection of songs and other writings intrinsically priceless, and which were instrumental in yielding to Thomson hundreds of pounds; and his good counsels, if advice as from a Mentor is meant, were never offered, never durst have been offered, to the haughty poet on whose face he had never looked, or whom at least he had never met.

We have often wondered if the following is to be included among the "good counsels" referred to:—"Pray, my good sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you, in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of editor. In the meantime, it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour; remember, Pope published the 'Iliad' by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute anything I say to an unworthy motive."

Is it possible Thomson did not know, or that he thought Burns had forgotten that he had himself published both the Kilmarnock and Edinburgh editions of his poems by subscription? Why, he might easily have published a very respectable volume indeed, composed of the songs in the possession of Johnson and Thomson, of "Tam o' Shanter," given to Captain Grose, as cheaply as to the gentlemen above mentioned their treasures had been, and of "The Jolly Beggars," the best thing of its kind in British literature, but of which Burns himself had not a copy, so prodigal was he of what others would have coined, and who could have blamed them?

into solid gold. A few tales like "Tam o' Shanter," and a handful of songs given annually to the public, had he been strict to turn the productions of his genius, as he would not have scrupled to do the labour of his hands, to good account, would have brought him not only competence but wealth, lighted up his home with sunshine, banished care and anxiety from his troubled bosom, and furnished him with most congenial and ennobling labour—labour twice blest, and imparting conscious dignity to a life, wasted in great measure in pursuits which he could hardly like, in occasional indulgences which he was forced to deplore, and in fretting cares for daily bread which unhinged the balance of an "equal mind." When we compare the ample means and leisure of Wordsworth, not more divinely-gifted than Burns, with *his* worried life and narrow resources, we are compelled with regret to own that to Burns himself after all, more than to aught external, is the difference to be attributed.

When one has a bad case to conduct he is very apt to fall into contradictions. In a letter to Professor Walker, after he must have realised a very good sum from the "Melodies," Thomson says—"I am not even yet compensated for the precious time consumed by me in poring over musty volumes," &c. Now in his letter to Burns with the first five pounds he had written: "I should be somewhat compensated for my labour by the pleasure I shall receive from the music." And in a letter to Robert Chambers, written apparently under a partial eclipse of judgment, as he hints in it that he might have retained all the songs and letters, and not have granted the use of them to Dr Currie for the edition of the works he was to undertake for behoof of the poet's family, after pluming himself upon his temporary surrender of them, (he, of course, retained the right to publish them in the work for which they were originally intended,) he says:—"For thus surrendering the manuscripts I received, both verbally and in writing, the warm thanks of the trustees for the family—Mr John Syme and Mr Gilbert Burns—who considered what I had done as a *fair return* for the poet's generosity of conduct to me." He must have been at his wit's end when he had re-

course to so lame and impotent a defence. For nearly half a century he must have reaped annually a large sum from the profits of a work, the great charm of which is Burns's exquisite lyrics, and, as Mr Lockhart has remarked, the fault lay in not arranging *in limine* the poet's proportion of the rewards. And when in ill health, and as might have easily been guessed in circumstances not too comfortable, he might have insisted, and Burns would not have been ill to persuade, that at least a prospective interest in the profits, if any, should be secured to his family in the event of his decease.

We are now drawing to a close. Ill health had broken the poet down. He had gone to Brow, on the Solway, for sea-bathing, but without obtaining any permanent relief. He knew his end was at hand; and he looked death calmly in the face. He was even cheerful in his intercourse with some female friends who saw him there. His cares were all for his family to be left unprovided for, and for his Jean about once more to become a mother. It was from Brow he wrote that letter for five pounds—from Brow that he addressed that last ineffectual appeal to Mrs Dunlop for an explanation of the withdrawal of her friendship. Dr Currie says that the poet got a satisfactory explanation. But it was not so; and his last farewell must have touched her heart, for it was naturally a kind one, with many a secret pang, when she learned that the bard was beyond reach of her sympathy or reproach. As the shadows of the dark valley were closing around him, the falling off of his friends would be doubly painful. His had ever been the open hand, and many had been the recipients of his warm-hearted charity. But nothing could be more painful for his mind to dwell on, than that the wife and children of one whose watchword had been Independence should be indebted for daily bread to alien bounty. He had given himself wholly for Scotland. Her peasant life, her patriotism, superstitions, heroic-memories, history, music—had all been illustrated by his splendid genius. Before him the literature of his country had lost all tinge of nationality. Her writers were afraid to be Scottish, and, from a dread of English sarcasm, were aiming at Addisonian neatness, or

moulding themselves on French forms, or exhibiting an insipid cosmopolitanism. With the instinctive glance of genius he saw a whole world of poetry revealed to him in the everyday life, the ways and customs, loves and griefs of his fellow-peasants, and, as he sung, the domain of human consciousness and happiness was enlarged. Neither Smollett nor Dr Moore, both accomplished men, and one of them of splendid genius, ever had the courage to attempt the Scottish dialect. Moore, in fact, attempted to dissuade Burns from its use But he knew better the region of his power; and nowhere is he so happy as in the use of his native dialect, which in his hand is never vulgar, and to which he is not slavishly bound; for when he rises to serious passion the language insensibly acquires dignity, and doffs much of its Scottish garb. Nor in his Scotch is he like the modish minstrels of our own day, who in their attempts in the good old Doric use a dialect that belongs to no district or time, a piebald livery of words differing in locality and in the era of their use. Since his time, in the path which he so happily opened up, we have had our Sir Walter Scott, our John Wilson, our John Galt, and many others. Nowise is it now attempted to be concealed that an author is Scottish and imbued with a Scottish spirit, but rather otherwise. Thus far, then, Scotland was a debtor to Burns; and though she neglected him when alive, her people, gentle and simple, being intent on their own well-being chiefly, it was not to be doubted that she would adopt the family of her great minstrel, and wipe off in her generous exertions for *them* the stigma of having allowed *him* to sink into the grave with a heart saddened for those he left behind. This, we say, could not be doubted. But Burns would be the last to whom it would occur. He never vapoured of what his country owed him; his thought was rather how much he owed his country. He did not theatrically leave his little ones as a bequest to an ungrateful, but haply in the future a repentant, people. He knew from his first appearance as an author, nay, before it, of his genius. Would that his last sad hours had been illuminated by a forecast of his own immortality, and of the zeal with which Scotland would hasten to

atone to the children for their neglect of the father. The sum for which he fancied that he would be thrown into jail was £7, 4s., overdue for his volunteer uniform. Nothing alarms an ordinary honest Scotchman so much as a letter from a *writer* demanding payment. All the pains and penalties of the law stare him in the face. Especially if he has not the money necessary to liquidate the debt, his fears are acute in proportion to his pride and his honesty. How acutely Burns felt may be learnt from this, that he wrote two letters *on the same day*, one from Dumfries to his cousin James Burnes, Montrose, for £10, and one from Brow to Thomson, quoted above, for £5. The £10 sent from Montrose were not drawn, the draft having been found among the poet's papers after his death. Mr Syme says the people of Dumfries would never have allowed Burns to have been taken to prison for such a sum. It is an unfortunate expression. First, as it is nothing to the point of Burns's anxiety, because he could not know this, nay, would have died almost ere he had acquainted the people of Dumfries with his difficulties; and, second, because his townsmen were not aware of his being in that particular pecuniary embarrassment.

As sea-bathing promised no permanent relief, he returned to Dumfries on the 18th of July. It was with difficulty he walked up the small *brae* leading to his own house. His first act was to write to his father-in-law in Mauchline to send Mrs Armour to wait on her daughter, who was hourly expecting to be brought to bed. The house in Millhole Brae must have been at this time a sad one. Not, however, unblessed by the light and love of human sympathy. There was the kind Jessie Lewars, who tended him with filial devotion; there was Findlater, the supervisor, to soothe as far as he could the last moments of his friend; and there was Dr Maxwell, skilful and affectionate. A gloom overspread Dumfries and the neighbourhood when it was understood that the great poet was indeed dying. The streets were filled with groups anxious to know of their illustrious townsmen. All political and personal rancours were forgotten. It was enough that a great, ill-requited countryman, the greatest living Scotchman, was

grappling with the last enemy in the humble tenement hard by; that there was a wife about to become a mother and a widow, and four helpless boys to be orphans. When it was known that the last moment was at hand, his four sons, who had been removed to the house of Mr Lewars, were sent for to witness the parting scene; and, his family and friends around him, and his bonnie Jean in bed in an adjoining chamber, on the morning of the 21st July 1796, muttering an execration against the legal agent whose letter had embittered his parting hours, this world-weary soul passed away into the unknown and infinite.

The body was laid out for the grave in a plain coffin, and had been wrapped about with a linen sheet. In the bed and round the coffin flowers were strewn. On the evening of the 25th the remains were removed from his own house to the town-hall. They were buried on the following day with military honours by his brother volunteers. Two regiments, one of infantry and one of cavalry, lined the streets from the town-hall to the burying-ground—a distance of more than half a mile. It was calculated that from ten to twelve thousand individuals took part in the procession or lined the streets. The body after a little delay was lowered into the grave, and few faces were dry. The volunteers fired some straggling shots over the resting-place of their comrade; the grave was filled in, the green sod replaced, and the people gradually melted away.

It is sad to know that while the remains of the poet were being thus honoured, his widow was in the pangs of childbirth. The child was named after Dr Maxwell, and died in infancy.

A splendid mausoleum now covers the poet's ashes. Overlooking the banks of the Doon arises a magnificent monument to his memory, while another graces the Calton Hill in "Edina, Scotia's darling seat." His country took charge of his Jean and her children whom he had loved so well; and at this hour no dearer names thrill a Scotchman's heart than those of the honoured "sons of Burns." Pilgrims from all lands, with pious regard, repair to the humble cottage where he was

born, to Alloway's auld haunted kirk, and the banks and braes o' bonnie Doon. And as they wander over the scenes made immortal by a peasant's song, heart clings closer to heart, the pride of birth and wealth melts away in a feeling of common humanity, and it is felt indeed that "a man 's a man for a' that."

That his country was niggardly to him while he was alive, —when he asked for bread giving him a stone, and then piling monumental marble over "the poor inhabitant below," —has been often made the theme of reproach to her. But in all countries the truly great men, the prophets, who were not of the market-place, who did not contribute to the material *wealth* of the people, have often been neglected and even put to death. Think of Socrates, think of the Christian apostles, think of Galileo, think of Tasso. Let England think of Butler of Otway, of Bloomfield, of Clare, and

> "Of Chatterton, the wondrous boy,
> The sleepless soul that perished in his pride,"

and well may Scotland bear up her head in the comparison All her sons and daughters think more highly of their country that Burns was of it. Let a Scotchman travel where he will, he is, if otherwise worthy, made more welcome for Burns's sake. That the poet was misappreciated while alive was due to many causes—religious, political, and personal. Besides, how often does it happen that the man we see before us, busy with ourselves in the prosaic battle of life, fighting for bread, jostling us perhaps, in no dignified position of brief authority, we cannot properly discern. Not till he is removed from us by being lifted up into some official or other eminence, or hidden from us by the curtain of the grave, do we begin to know his greatness. Not in this generation do we think a man like Burns would be allowed to struggle with base entanglements. To talk of the unknowable is, however, bootless. Enough that Scotland's eyes were opened in time to succour and honour those who bore the poet's name, and that now she cherishes with an undying love the memory of ROBERT BURNS.

APPENDIX

TO

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

THE Appendix to the Biographical Sketch of Robert Burns will appropriately commence with his letter to Dr Moore, a distinguished London physician, and author of several important works, including "A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany," "Zeluco," &c. The letter—which was called forth by a strong expression of admiration for the Poet's genius on the part of Dr Moore—was written in August 1787, immediately after his first visit to Edinburgh, and gives a graphic account of his life and experience up to that time. The Editor believes that in reprinting this letter, along with all the more important and valuable of the sketches written by contemporaries, he will materially assist the reader in forming a distinct impression of the poet's personal appearance and habits.

THE POET'S LETTER TO DR MOORE.

I HAVE not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the herald's office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

> "My ancient but ignoble blood
> Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood."

Gules, purpure, argent, &c., quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large: where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom. I have met with few who

understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate.

At those years, I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot [idiotic] piety. I say idiot piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and, by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look out in suspicious places; and, though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was the Vision of Mirza, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ear—

> "For though on dreadful whirls we hung
> High on the broken wave."

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were the Life of Hannibal, and the History of Sir William Wallace. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier, while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c., used a few years afterwards to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was, like our Catechism definition of infinitude, without bounds or limits. I formed several connexions with other younkers, who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy in the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged playfellows. It takes a few dashes into the world to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were, perhaps, born in the same village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my ploughboy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations, and one, whose heart, I am sure, not even the "Munny Begum" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils.* My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of "The Twa Dogs." My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and, to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother, (Gilbert,) who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel-writer might,

* "My brother," says Gilbert Burns, "seems to set off his early companions in too consequential a manner. The principal acquaintances we had in Ayr, while boys, were four sons of Mr Andrew M'Culloch, a distant relation of my mother's, who kept a tea-shop, and had made a little money in the contraband trade very common at that time. He died while the boys were young, and my father was nominated one of the tutors. The two eldest were bred shopkeepers, the third a surgeon, and the youngest, the only surviving one, was bred in a counting-house in Glasgow, where he is now a respectable merchant. I believe all these boys went to the West Indies. Then there were two sons of Dr Malcolm, whom I have mentioned in my letter to Mrs Dunlop. The eldest, a very worthy young man, went to the East Indies, where he had a commission in the army; he is the person whose heart my brother says the 'Munny Begum scenes could not corrupt.' The other, by the interest of Lady Wallace, got an ensignсy in a regiment raised by the Duke of Hamilton during the American war. I believe neither of them are now (1797) alive. We also knew the present Dr Paterson of Ayr, and a younger brother of his now in Jamaica, who were much younger than us. I had almost forgot to mention Dr Charles of Ayr, who was a little older than my brother, and with whom we had a longer and closer intimacy than with any of the others, which did not, however, continue in after life."

perhaps, have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in fears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave—brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scotch idiom: she was a "bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass." In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell; you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her.—Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sang a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and, till within the last twelve months, have been my highest, enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here, but a difference commencing between him and his landlord as to terms, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!

It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little

story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps, the most ungainly awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from Salmon's and Guthrie's Geographical Grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakespeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, The Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener's Directory, Boyle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditations, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes.* My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the will-o'-wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings, by which I could enter the temple of fortune, were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability,

* "I wonder," says Gilbert Burns, "how Robert could attribute to our father that lasting resentment of his going to a dancing-school against his will, and of which he was incapable. I believe the truth was that about this time he began to see the dangerous impetuosity of my brother's passions, as well as his not being amenable to counsel, which often irritated my father, and which, he would naturally think, a dancing-school was not likely to correct. But he was proud of Robert's genius, which he bestowed more expense on cultivating than on the rest of the family—and he was equally delighted with his warmth of heart and conversational powers. He had indeed that dislike of dancing-schools which Robert mentions; but so far overcame it during Robert's first month of attendance that he permitted the rest of the family that were fit for it to accompany him during the second month. Robert excelled in dancing, and was for some time distractedly fond of it."

as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that always, where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain.* My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and, as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various; sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and, as I never cared further for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love-adventure without an assisting confidant.

I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and, I daresay, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe. The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love-adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farmhouse and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature: to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were, till this time, new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel

"Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower——"

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I stayed I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far that, though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—Tristram Shandy and the Man of Feeling—were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except "Winter, a dirge," the eldest of my printed pieces; "The Death of poor Mailie," "John Barleycorn," and songs first, second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school-business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town, (Irvine,) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My ——, and to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, the shop took fire and burnt to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

I was obliged to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and to crown my distresses, a *belle fille*, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my constitutional melancholy being

increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—"Depart from me, ye accursed!"

From this adventure I learnt something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune.* He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood, taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea, where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set on shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of everything. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding that he is at this time master of a large West Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure, I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief, and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough. I wrote the "Poet's Welcome."† My reading only increased while in this town by two stray volumes of Pamela, and one of Ferdinand Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fergusson's Scottish Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hare-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

I entered on this farm with a full resolution, "Come, go to, I will be wise!" I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and, in short, in spite of "the devil, and the world, and the flesh," I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second from the late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of

* Mr Richard Brown.

† "Rob the Rhymer's Welcome to his Bastard Child"

names. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my "Holy Fair." I had a notion myself that the piece had some merit; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend, who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to the printed poem, "The Lament." This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother: in truth, it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But, before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say that, *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves.—To know myself had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public;* and, besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as

* "It is hardly possible to express," says the unfortunate Heron, "with what eager admiration and delight they were everywhere received. Old and young, high and low, grave and gay learned or ignorant, all were alike delighted agitated, transported. I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember, how that even ploughboys and maid-servants would have gladly parted with the wages which they earned the most

I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

'Hungry ruin had me in the wind."

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia—"The gloomy night is gathering fast," when a letter from Dr Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The doctor belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion, that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oublie moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je l'oublie!*

I need relate no further. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to "catch" the characters and the manners "living as they rise." Whether I have profited, time will show.

. . . . . .

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. Her very elegant and friendly letter I cannot answer at present, as my presence is requisite in Edinburgh, and I set out to morrow. R. B.

LETTER OF GILBERT BURNS TO MRS DUNLOP.

The following interesting letter was drawn up shortly after the poet's death by his brother Gilbert, at the request of Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop, who was anxious to obtain some biographical details regarding the early years of her admired and lamented friend:—

Robert Burns was born on the 25th day of January 1759, in a small house about two miles from the town of Ayr, and within a few

hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might but procure the works of Burns. A copy happened to be presented from a gentleman in Ayrshire to a friend in my neighbourhood; he put it into my hands, as a work containing some effusions of the most extraordinary genius. I took it, rather that I might not disoblige the lender, than from any ardour of curiosity or expectation. 'An unlettered ploughman, a poet!' said I, with contemptuous incredulity. It was on a Saturday evening. I opened the volume by accident, while I was undressing to go to bed. I closed it not till a late hour on the rising Sunday morn. after I had read over every syllable it contained.'

hundred yards of Alloway Church, which his poem of "Tam o' Shanter" has rendered immortal. The name, which the poet and his brother modernised into Burns, was originally Burnes, or Burness. Their father, William Burnes, was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, and had received the education common in Scotland to persons in his condition of life: he could read and write, and had some knowledge of arithmetic. His family having fallen into reduced circumstances, he was compelled to leave his home in his nineteenth year, and turned his steps towards the south, in quest of a livelihood. The same necessity attended his elder brother Robert. "I have often heard my father," says Gilbert Burns, in his letter to Mrs Dunlop, "describe the anguish of mind he felt when they parted on the top of a hill on the confines of their native place, each going off his several way in search of new adventures, and scarcely knowing whither he went. My father undertook to act as a gardener, and shaped his course to Edinburgh, where he wrought hard when he could get work, passing through a variety of difficulties. Still, however, he endeavoured to spare something for the support of his aged parents: and I recollect hearing him mention his having sent a bank-note for this purpose, when money of that kind was so scarce in Kincardineshire, that they scarcely knew how to employ it when it arrived." From Edinburgh, William Burnes passed westward into the county of Ayr, where he engaged himself as a gardener to the laird of Fairly, with whom he lived two years; then changing his service for that of Crawford of Doonside. At length, being desirous of settling in life, he took a perpetual lease of seven acres of land from Dr Campbell, physician in Ayr, with the view of commencing nurseryman and public gardener; and, having built a house upon it with his own hands, married, in December, 1757, Agnes Brown, the mother of our poet, who still survives. The first fruit of this marriage was Robert, the subject of these memoirs, born on the 25th of January 1759, as has already been mentioned. Before William Burnes had made much progress in preparing his nursery, he was withdrawn from that undertaking by Mr Ferguson, who purchased the estate of Doonholm, in the immediate neighbourhood, and engaged him as his gardener and overseer; and this was his situation when our poet was born. Though in the service of Mr Ferguson, he lived in his own house, his wife managing her family and her little dairy, which consisted sometimes of two, sometimes of three milch cows; and this state of unambitious content continued till the year 1766. His son Robert was sent by him, in his sixth year, to a school at Alloway Mill, about a mile distant, taught by a person of the name of Campbell; but this teacher being in a few months appointed master of the workhouse at Ayr, William Burnes, in conjunction with some other heads of families, engaged John Murdoch in his stead. The education of our poet, and of his brother Gilbert, was in common; and of their proficiency under Mr Murdoch we have the following account:—"With him we learnt to read English tolerably well, and to write a little. He taught us, too, the English grammar

I was too young to profit much from his lessons in grammar; but Robert made some proficiency in it—a circumstance of considerable weight in the unfolding of his genius and character; as he soon became remarkable for the fluency and correctness of his expression, and read the few books that came in his way with much pleasure and improvement; for even then he was a reader when he could get a book. Murdoch, whose library at that time had no great variety in it, lent him 'The Life of Hannibal,' which was the first book he read, (the school books excepted,) and almost the only one he had an opportunity of reading while he was at school: for 'The Life of Wallace,' which he classes with it in one of his letters to you, he did not see for some years afterwards, when he borrowed it from the blacksmith who shod our horses."

It appears that William Burnes approved himself greatly in the service of Mr Ferguson by his intelligence, industry, and integrity. In consequence of this, with a view of promoting his interest, Mr Ferguson leased him a farm, of which we have the following account:—

"The farm was upwards of seventy acres, (between eighty and ninety English statute measure,) the rent of which was to be forty pounds annually for the first six years, and afterwards forty-five pounds. My father endeavoured to sell his leasehold property, for the purpose of stocking his farm, but at that time was unable, and Mr Ferguson lent him a hundred pounds for that purpose. He removed to his new situation at Whitsuntide, 1766. It was, I think, not above two years after this, that Murdoch, our tutor and friend, left this part of the country; and there being no school near us, and our little services being useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings, by candle-light; and in this way my two eldest sisters got all the education they received. I remember a circumstance that happened at this time, which, though trifling in itself, is fresh in my memory, and may serve to illustrate the early character of my brother. Murdoch came to spend a night with us, and to take his leave when he was about to go into Carrick. He brought us, as a present and memorial of him, a small compendium of English Grammar, and the tragedy of 'Titus Andronicus,' and, by way of passing the evening, he began to read the play aloud. We were all attention for some time, till presently the whole party was dissolved in tears. A female in the play (I have but a confused remembrance of it) had her hands chopt off, and her tongue cut out, and then was insultingly desired to call for water to wash her hands. At this, in an agony of distress, we with one voice desired he would read no more. My father observed, that if we would not hear it out, it would be needless to leave the play with us. Robert replied, that if it was left he would burn it. My father was going to chide him for this ungrateful return to his tutor's kindness; but Murdoch interfered, declaring that he liked to see so much sensibility; and he left 'The School for Love,' a comedy, (translated I think from the French,) in its place.

"Nothing," continues Gilbert Burns, "could be more retired than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant; we rarely saw anybody but the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age, or near it, in the neighbourhood. Indeed, the greatest part of the land in the vicinity was at that time possessed by shopkeepers, and people of that stamp, who had retired from business, or who kept their farm in the country, at the same time that they followed business in town. My father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits. He borrowed 'Salmon's Geographical Grammar' for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book-society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of 'Derham's Physico and Astro-Theology,' and 'Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation,' to give us some idea of Astronomy and Natural History. Robert read all these books with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to 'Stackhouse's History of the Bible,' then lately published by James Meuross, in Kilmarnock: from this Robert collected a competent knowledge of ancient history; for no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches. A brother of my mother, who had lived with us for some time and had learnt some arithmetic by our winter evening's candle, went into a bookseller's shop in Ayr, to purchase 'The Ready Reckoner, or Tradesman's Sure Guide,' and a book to teach him to write letters. Luckily, in place of 'The Complete Letter-Writer,' he got by mistake a small collection of letters by the most eminent writers, with a few sensible directions for attaining an easy epistolary style. This book was to Robert of the greatest consequence. It inspired him with a strong desire to excel in letter-writing, while it furnished him with models by some of the first writers in our language.

"My brother was about thirteen or fourteen, when my father, regretting that we wrote so ill, sent us, week about, during a summer quarter, to the parish school of Dalrymple, which, though between two and three miles distant, was the nearest to us, that we might have an opportunity of remedying this defect. About this time a bookish acquaintance of my father's procured us a reading of two volumes of Richardson's 'Pamela,' which was the first novel we read, and the only part of Richardson's works my brother was acquainted with till towards the period of his commencing author. Till that time, too, he remained unacquainted with Fielding, with Smollett, (two volumes of 'Ferdinand Count Fathom,' and two volumes of 'Peregrine Pickle' excepted,) with Hume, with Robertson, and almost all our authors of eminence of the later times. I recollect, indeed, my father borrowed a volume of English history

from Mr Hamilton of Bourtreehill's gardener. It treated of the reign of James I., and his unfortunate son, Charles, but I do not know who was the author; all that I remember of it is something of Charles's conversation with his children. About this time, Murdoch, our former teacher, after having been in different places in the country, and having taught a school some time in Dumfries, came to be the established teacher of the English language in Ayr, a circumstance of considerable consequence to us. The remembrance of my father's former friendship, and his attachment to my brother, made him do everything in his power for our improvement. He sent us Pope's works, and some other poetry, the first that we had an opportunity of reading, excepting what is contained in 'The English Collection,' and in the volume of the Edinburgh Magazine for 1772; excepting also those 'excellent new songs' that are hawked about the country in baskets, or exposed on stalls in the streets.

"The summer after we had been at Dalrymple school, my father sent Robert to Ayr, to revise his English grammar, with his former teacher. He had been there only one week, when he was obliged to return, to assist at the harvest. When the harvest was over, he went back to school, where he remained two weeks; and this completes the account of his school education, excepting one summer quarter, some time afterwards, that he attended the parish school of Kirkoswald, (where he lived with a brother of my mother's,) to learn surveying.

"During the two last weeks that he was with Murdoch, he himself was engaged in learning French, and he communicated the instructions he received to my brother, who, when he returned, brought home with him a French dictionary and grammar, and the 'Adventures of Telemachus' in the original. In a little while, by the assistance of these books, he had acquired such a knowledge of the language, as to read and understand any French author in prose. This was considered as a sort of prodigy, and through the medium of Murdoch, procured him the acquaintance of several lads in Ayr, who were at that time gabbling French, and the notice of some families, particularly that of Dr Malcolm, where a knowledge of French was a recommendation.

"Observing the facility with which he had acquired the French language, Mr Robinson, the established writing master in Ayr, and Mr Murdoch's particular friend, having himself acquired a considerable knowledge of the Latin language by his own industry, without ever having learned it at school, advised Robert to make the same attempt, promising him every assistance in his power. Agreeably to this advice, he purchased 'The Rudiments of the Latin Tongue,' but finding this study dry and uninteresting, it was quickly laid aside. He frequently returned to his Rudiments on any little chagrin or disappointment, particularly in his love affairs; but the Latin seldom predominated more than a day or two at a time, or a week at most. Observing himself the ridicule that would attach to this

sort of conduct if it were known, he made two or three humorous stanzas on the subject, which I cannot now recollect, but they all ended,

'So I'll to my Latin again.'

"Thus you see Mr Murdoch was a principal means of my brother's improvement. Worthy man! though foreign to my present purpose, I cannot take leave of him without tracing his future history. He continued for some years a respected and useful teacher at Ayr, till one evening that he had been overtaken in liquor, he happened to speak somewhat disrespectfully of Dr Dalrymple, the parish minister, who had not paid him that attention to which he thought himself entitled. In Ayr he might as well have spoken blasphemy. He found it proper to give up his appointment. He went to London, where he still lives, a private teacher of French. He has been a considerable time married, and keeps a shop of stationery wares.

"The father of Dr Paterson, now physician at Ayr, was, I believe, a native of Aberdeenshire, and was one of the established teachers in Ayr, when my father settled in the neighbourhood. He early recognised my father as a fellow-native of the north of Scotland, and a certain degree of intimacy subsisted between them during Mr Paterson's life. After his death, his widow, who is a very genteel woman, and of great worth, delighted in doing what she thought her husband would have wished to have done, and assiduously kept up her attentions to all his acquaintance. She kept alive the intimacy with our family, by frequently inviting my father and mother to her house on Sundays, when she met them at church.

"When she came to know my brother's passion for books, she kindly offered us the use of her husband's library, and from her we got the 'Spectator,' 'Pope's Translation of Homer,' and several other books that were of use to us. Mount Oliphant, the farm my father possessed in the parish of Ayr, is almost the very poorest soil I know of in a state of cultivation. A stronger proof of this I cannot give than that, notwithstanding the extraordinary rise in the value of lands in Scotland, it was, after a considerable sum laid out in improving it by the proprietor, let a few years ago five pounds per annum lower than the rent paid for it by my father thirty years ago. My father, in consequence of this, soon came into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accidents and disease. To the buffetings of misfortune, we could only oppose hard labour, and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparing. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in threshing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old, (for he was now

above fifty,) broken down with the long continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five children, and in a declining state of circumstances—these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull headache, which at a future period of his life was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed in the night-time.

"By a stipulation in my father's lease, he had a right to throw it up, if he thought proper, at the end of every sixth year. He attempted to fix himself in a better farm at the end of the first six years, but failing in that attempt, he continued where he was for six years more. He then took the farm of Lochlea, of a hundred and thirty acres, at the rent of twenty shillings an acre, in the parish of Torbolton, of Mr ——, then a merchant in Ayr, and now (1797) a merchant in Liverpool. He removed to this farm at Whitsunday, 1777, and possessed it only seven years. No writing had ever been made out of the conditions of the lease; a misunderstanding took place respecting them; the subjects in dispute were submitted to arbitration, and the decision involved my father's affairs in ruin. He lived to know of this decision, but not to see any execution in consequence of it. He died on the 13th of February 1784.

"The seven years we lived in Torbolton parish (extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age,) were not marked by much literary improvement; but, during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though when young he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he 'fainted, sunk, and died away;' but the agitations of his mind and body exceeded anything of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure, to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivator, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her. One generally reigned paramount in his affections; but as Yorick's affections

flowed out toward Madame de L—— at the remise door, while the eternal vows of Eliza were upon him, so Robert was frequently encountering other attractions, which formed so many under-plots in the drama of his love. As these connexions were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty, (from which he never deviated till he reached his twenty-third year,) he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be soon the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he had no probability of being master of for a great while. He began, therefore, to think of trying some other line of life. He and I had for several years taken land of my father for the purpose of raising flax on our own account. In the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as being suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax raising. He accordingly wrought at the business of a flaxdresser in Irvine for six months, but abandoned it at that period, as neither agreeing with his health nor inclination. In Irvine he had contracted some acquaintance of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him. Towards the end of the period under review (in his twenty-fourth year,) and soon after his father's death, he was furnished with the subject of his Epistle to John Rankin. During this period also he became a freemason, which was his first introduction to the life of a boon companion. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, and the praise he has bestowed on Scotch drink (which seem to have misled his historians,) I do not recollect, during these seven years, nor till towards the end of his commencing author, (when his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company,) to have ever seen him intoxicated; nor was he at all given to drinking. A stronger proof of the general sobriety of his conduct need not be required than what I am about to give. During the whole of the time we lived in the farm of Lochlea with my father he allowed my brother and me such wages for our labour as he gave to other labourers, as a part of which, every article of our clothing, manufactured in the family, was regularly accounted for. When my father's affairs drew near a crisis, Robert and I took the farm of Mossgiel, consisting of a hundred and eighteen acres, at the rent of ninety pounds per annum, (the farm on which I live at present,) from Mr Gavin Hamilton, as an asylum for the family in case of the worst. It was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family, and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was seven pounds per annum each. And during the whole time this family concern lasted, which was for four years, as well as during the preceding period at Lochlea, his expenses never in any one year exceeded his slender income. As I was intrusted with the keeping of the family accounts, it is not possible that there can

be any fallacy in this statement in my brother's favour. His temperance and frugality were everything that could be wished.

"The farm of Mossgiel lies very high, and mostly on a cold wet bottom. The first four years that we were on the farm were very frosty, and the spring was very late. Our crops in consequence were very unprofitable; and, notwithstanding our utmost diligence and economy, we found ourselves obliged to give up our bargain, with the loss of a considerable part of our original stock. It was during these four years that Robert formed his connexion with Jean Armour, afterwards Mrs Burns. This connexion *could no longer be conceal'd*, about the time we came to a final determination to quit the farm. Robert durst not engage with his family in his poor unsettled state, but was anxious to shield his partner, by every means in his power, from the consequences of their imprudence. It was agreed therefore between them, that they should make a legal acknowledgment of an irregular and private marriage; that he should go to Jamaica to push his fortune: and that she should remain with her father till it might please Providence to put the means of supporting a family in his power.

"Mrs Burns was a great favourite of her father's. The intimation of a marriage was the first suggestion he received of her real situation. He was in the greatest distress, and fainted away. The marriage did not appear to him to make the matter better. A husband in Jamaica appeared to him and his wife little better than none, and an effectual bar to any other prospects of a settlement in life that their daughter might have. They therefore expressed a wish to her, that the written papers which respected the marriage should be cancelled, and thus the marriage rendered void. In her melancholy state, she felt the deepest remorse at having brought such heavy affliction on parents that loved her so tenderly, and submitted to their entreaties. Their wish was mentioned to Robert. He felt the deepest anguish of mind. He offered to stay at home and provide for his wife and family in the best manner that his daily labours could provide for them; that being the only means in his power. Even this offer they did not approve of; for humble as Miss Armour's station was, and great though her imprudence had been, she still, in the eyes of her partial parents, might look to a better connexion than that with my friendless and unhappy brother, at that time without house or biding place. Robert at length consented to their wishes; but his feelings on this occasion were of the most distracting nature: and the impression of sorrow was not effaced, till by a regular marriage they were indissolubly united. In the state of mind which this separation produced, he wished to leave the country as soon as possible, and agreed with Dr Douglas to go out to Jamaica, as an assistant overseer, or, as I believe it is called, a book-keeper, on his estate. As he had not sufficient money to pay his passage, and the vessel in which Dr Douglas was to procure a passage for him was not expected to sail for some time, Mr Hamilton advised him to publish his poems in

the meantime by subscription, as a likely way of getting a little money, to provide him more liberally in necessaries for Jamaica. Agreeably to this advice, subscription-bills were printed immediately, and the printing was commenced at Kilmarnock, his preparations going on at the same time for his voyage. The reception, however, which his poems met with in the world, and the friends they procured him, made him change his resolution of going to Jamaica, and he was advised to go to Edinburgh to publish a second edition. On his return, in happier circumstances, he renewed his connexion with Mrs Burns, and rendered it permanent by a union for life.

"Thus, madam, have I endeavoured to give you a simple narrative of the leading circumstances in my brother's early life. The remaining part he spent in Edinburgh, or in Dumfriesshire, and its incidents are as well known to you as to me. His genius having procured him your patronage and friendship, this gave rise to the correspondence between you, in which, I believe, his sentiments were delivered with the most respectful, but most unreserved confidence, and which only terminated with the last days of his life."

LETTER FROM MR JOHN MURDOCH.

"Sir,—I was lately favoured with a letter from our worthy friend, the Rev. Wm. Adair, in which he requested me to communicate to you whatever particulars I could recollect concerning Robert Burns, the Ayrshire poet. My business being at present multifarious and harassing, my attention is consequently so much divided, and I am so little in the habit of expressing my thoughts on paper, that at this distance of time I can give but a very imperfect sketch of the early part of the life of that extraordinary genius, with which alone I am acquainted.

"William Burnes, the father of the poet, was born in the shire of Kincardine, and bred a gardener. He had been settled in Ayrshire ten or twelve years before I knew him, and had been in the service of Mr Crawford of Doonside. He was afterwards employed as a gardener and overseer by Provost Ferguson of Doonholme, in the parish of Alloway, which is now united with that of Ayr. In this parish, on the road side, a Scotch mile and a half from the town of Ayr, and half a mile from the bridge of Doon, William Burnes took a piece of land, consisting of about seven acres; part of which he laid out in garden ground, and part of which he kept to graze a cow, &c, still continuing in the employ of Provost Ferguson. Upon this little farm was erected a humble dwelling, of which William Burnes was the architect. It was, with the exception of a little straw, literally a tabernacle of clay. In this mean cottage, of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. The

'Cotter's Saturday Night' will give some idea of the temper and manners that prevailed there.

"In 1765, about the middle of March, Mr Wm. Burnes came to Ayr, and sent to the school where I was improving in writing, under my good friend Mr Robinson, desiring that I would come and speak to him at a certain inn, and bring my writing-book with me. This was immediately complied with. Having examined my writing, he was pleased with it, (you will readily allow he was not difficult,) and told me that he had received very satisfactory information of Mr Tennant, the master of the English school, concerning my improvement in English, and in his method of teaching. In the month of May following, I was engaged by Mr Burnes, and four of his neighbours, to teach, and accordingly began to teach the little school at Alloway, which was situated a few yards from the argillaceous fabric above mentioned. My five employers undertook to board me by turns, and to make up a certain salary at the end of the year, provided my quarterly payments from the different pupils did not amount to that sum.

"My pupil, Robert Burns, was then between six or seven years of age; his preceptor about eighteen. Robert, and his younger brother Gilbert, had been grounded a little in English before they were put under my care. They both made a rapid progress in reading, and a tolerable progress in writing. In reading, dividing words into syllables by rule, spelling without book, parsing sentences, &c., Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. The books most commonly used in the school were the Spelling-Book, the New Testament, the Bible, Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse, and Fisher's English Grammar. They committed to memory the hymns, and other poems of that collection, with uncommon facility. This facility was partly owing to the method pursued by their father and me in instructing them, which was, to make them thoroughly acquainted with the meaning of every word in each sentence that was to be committed to memory. By the by, this may be easier done, and at an earlier period, than is generally thought. As soon as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order; sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words, and to supply the ellipses. These, you know, are the means of knowing that the pupil understands his author. These are excellent helps to the arrangement of words in sentences, as well as to a variety of expression.

"Gilbert always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church music: here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, 'Mirth, with

thee I mean to live:' and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the Muses, he would surely never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind.

"In the year 1769, Mr Burnes quitted his mud edifice, and took possession of a farm (Mount Oliphant) of his own improving, while in the service of Provost Ferguson. This farm being at a considerable distance from the school, the boys could not attend regularly: and some changes taking place among the other supporters of the school, I left it, having continued to conduct it for nearly two years and a half.

"In the year 1772, I was appointed (being one of five candidates who were examined) to teach the English school at Ayr; and, in 1773, Robert Burns came to board and lodge with me, for the purpose of revising the English grammar, &c., that he might be better qualified to instruct his brothers and sisters at home. He was now with me day and night, in school, at all meals, and in all my walks. At the end of one week, I told him, that, as he was now pretty much master of the parts of speech, &c., I should like to teach him something of French pronunciation; that when he should meet with the name of a French town, ship, officer, or the like, in the newspapers, he might be able to pronounce it something like a French word. Robert was glad to hear this proposal, and immediately we attacked the French with great courage.

"Now there was little else to be heard but the declension of nouns, the conjugation of verbs, &c. When walking together and even at meals, I was constantly telling him the names of different objects, as they presented themselves, in French, so that he was hourly laying in a stock of words and sometimes little phrases. In short, he took such pleasure in learning, and I in teaching, that it was difficult to say which of the two was most zealous in the business: and about the end of the second week of our study of the French, we began to read a little of the 'Adventures of Telemachus,' in Fénelon's own words.

"But now the plains of Mount Oliphant began to whiten, and Robert was summoned to relinquish the pleasing scenes that surrounded the grotto of Calypso; and, armed with a sickle, to seek glory by signalising himself in the fields of Ceres—and so he did; for although but about fifteen, I was told that he performed the work of a man.

"Thus was I deprived of my very apt pupil, and consequently agreeable companion, at the end of three weeks, one of which was spent entirely in the study of English, and the other two chiefly in that of French. I did not, however, lose sight of him; but was a frequent visitant at his father's house, when I had my half-holiday; and very often went, accompanied with one or two persons more intelligent than myself, that good William Burnes might enjoy a mental feast. Then the labouring oar was shifted to some other hand. The father and the son sat down with us, when we enjoyed

a conversation, wherein solid reasoning, sensible remark, and a moderate seasoning of jocularity, were so nicely blended as to render it palatable to all parties. Robert had a hundred questions to ask me about the French, &c.; and the father, who had always rational information in view, had still some question to propose to my more learned friends, upon moral or natural philosophy, or some such interesting subject. Mrs Burnes, too, was of the party as much as possible—

> 'But still the house affairs would draw her thence,
> Which ever as she could with haste despatch,
> She 'd come again, and with a greedy ear,
> Devour up their discourse,'——

and particularly that of her husband. At all times, and in all companies, she listened to him with a more marked attention than to anybody else. When under the necessity of being absent, while he was speaking, she seemed to regret as a real loss, that she had missed what the good man had said. This worthy woman, Agnes Brown, had the most thorough esteem for her husband of any woman I ever knew. I can by no means wonder that she highly esteemed him: for I myself have always considered William Burnes as by far the best of the human race that ever I had the pleasure of being acquainted with—and many a worthy character I have known. I can cheerfully join with Robert in the last line of his epitaph (borrowed from Goldsmith):—

> 'And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side.'

"He was an excellent husband, if I may judge from his assiduous attention to the ease and comfort of his worthy partner, and from her affectionate behaviour to him, as well as her unwearied attention to the duties of a mother.

"He was a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in the path of virtue; not in driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore, when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproof was severely so; and a stripe with the *tawz*, even on the skirt of the coat, gave heartfelt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

"He had the art of gaining the esteem and good-will of those that were labourers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice: the one time it was with the foreman of the band, for not reaping the field as he was desired; and the other time, it was with an old man, for using smutty innuendoes and *double entendres*. Were every foul-mouthed old man to receive a seasonable check in this way, it would be to the advantage of the rising generation. As he was at no time overbearing to inferiors, he was equally incapable of that passive, pitiful, paltry spirit, that induces some people to *keep bowing and bowing* in the presence of a great man. He always

treated superiors with a becoming respect; but he never gave the smallest encouragement to aristocratical arrogance. But I must not pretend to give you a description of all the manly qualities, the rational and Christian virtues, of the venerable William Burnes. Time would fail me. I shall only add, that he carefully practised every known duty, and avoided everything that was criminal; or, in the apostle's words, 'Herein did he exercise himself in living a life void of offence towards God and towards men.' Oh, for a world of men of such dispositions! We should then have no wars. I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honour and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude, as it is to extol what are called heroic actions: then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of the monuments I see in Westminster Abbey.

"Although I cannot do justice to the character of this worthy man, yet you will perceive, from these few particulars, what kind of person had the principal hand in the education of our poet. He spoke the English language with more propriety (both with respect to diction and pronunciation) than any man I ever knew with no greater advantages. This had a very good effect on the boys, who began to talk and reason like men much sooner than their neighbours. I do not recollect any of their contemporaries, at my little seminary, who afterwards made any great figure, as literary characters, except Dr Tennant, who was chaplain to Colonel Fullarton's Regiment, and who is now in the East Indies. He is a man of genius and learning; yet affable and free from pedantry.

"Mr Burnes in a short time found that he had over-rated Mount Oliphant, and that he could not rear his numerous family upon it. After being there some years, he removed to Lochlea, in the parish of Torbolton, where, I believe, Robert wrote most of his poems.

"But here, sir, you will permit me to pause. I can tell you but little more relative to our poet. I shall, however, in my next, send you a copy of one of his letters to me, about the year 1783. I received one since, but it is mislaid. Please remember me, in the best manner, to my worthy friend Mr Adair, when you see him or write to him.

"HART STREET, BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,
LONDON, *Feb.* 22, 1799.

SKETCH BY DAVID SILLAR.

David Sillar, to whom Burns addressed several of the finest of his epistles, was a native of Torbolton. He was for many years schoolmaster at Irvine. He published a volume of poems, in the Scottish dialect, of some merit.

"Robert Burns was sometime in the parish of Torbolton, prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily pro

cured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe, he had a great deal to say for himself, but that they suspected his principles. He wore the only tied hair in the parish; and in the church his plaid, which was of a particular colour, (I think fillemot,) he wrapped in a peculiar manner round his shoulders. These surmises, and his exterior, made me solicitous of his acquaintance. I was introduced by Gilbert not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where, in a short time, I became a frequent, and, I believe, not unwelcome, visitant. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the bard, we frequently met upon Sundays at church; when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or our lasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have often been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex; many times when I have been bashfully anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them, with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance. Some of the few opportunities of a noontide walk that a country life allows her laborious sons, he spent on the banks of the river, or in the woods, in the neighbourhood of Stair. Some book or other he always carried, and read, when not otherwise employed: it was likewise his custom to read at table."

RECOLLECTIONS OF WILLIAM CLARK

The following testimony by William Clark, who had lived with the poet as a ploughman for six months, was communicated to a gentleman in Kirkcudbright.

"Soon after Burns became tenant of Ellisland, William Clark lived with him as servant during the winter half-year, he thinks, of 1789-90. . . . . Burns kept two men and two women servants; but he invariably, when at home, took his meals with his wife and family in the little parlour. Clark thought he was as good a manager of land as the generality of the farmers in the neighbourhood. The farm of Ellisland was said to be moderately rented, and was susceptible of much improvement, had improvement been in repute. Burns sometimes visited the neighbouring farmers, and they returned the compliment; but that way of spending time and exchanging civilities was not so common then as now, and, besides, the most of the people thereabouts had no expectation that Burns's conduct and writings would be so much noticed afterwards. Burns kept nine or ten milch-cows, some young cattle, four horses, and several pet sheep: of the latter he was very fond. During the winter and spring

time, when he was not engaged with the excise business, he occasionally held the plough for an hour or so for him (William Clark), and was a fair workman, though the mode of ploughing now-a-days is much superior in many respects. During seed-time, Burns might be frequently seen, at an early hour, in the fields with his sowing-sheet: but as business often required his attention from home, he did not sow the whole of the grain. He was a kind and indulgent master, and spoke familiarly to his servants, both in the house and out of it, though, if anything put him out of humour, he was *gey jaldersome for a wee while*: the storm was soon over, and there was never a word of *upcast* afterwards. Clark never saw him really angry but once, and it was occasioned by the carelessness of one of the women-servants who had not cut potatoes small enough, which brought one of the cows into danger of being choked. His looks, gestures, and voice on that occasion were terrible; W. C. was glad to be out of his sight, and when they met again, Burns was perfectly calm. If any extra work was to be done, the men sometimes got a dram; but Clark had lived with masters who were more *flush* in that way to their servants. Clark, during the six months he spent at Ellisland, never once saw his master intoxicated or incapable of managing his own business. . . . Burns, when at home, usually wore a broad blue bonnet, a blue or drab long tailed coat, corduroy breeches, dark blue stockings, and *cootikens*, and in cold weather a black-and-white-checked plaid wrapped round his shoulders. Mrs Burns was a good and prudent housewife, kept everything in neat and tidy order, and was well liked by the servants, for whom she provided abundance of wholesome food. At parting, Burns gave Clark a certificate of character, and, besides paying his wages in full, gave him a shilling for a *fairing*."

SKETCH BY DUGALD STEWART.

Contributed to Dr Currie's edition of the Life and Works of the poet.

"The first time I saw Robert Burns was on the 23d of October 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayrshire, together with our common friend Mr John Mackenzie, surgeon in Mauchline, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of his acquaintance. I am enabled to mention the date particularly, by some verses which Burns wrote after he returned home, and in which the day of our meeting is recorded.—My excellent and much lamented friend, the late Basil Lord Daer, happened to arrive at Catrine the same day, and, by the kindness and frankness of his manners, left an impression on the mind of the poet which never was effaced. The verses I allude to are among the most imperfect of his pieces; but a few stanzas may perhaps be an object of curiosity to you, both on account of the character to which they relate, and of the light which they throw on the situation and feelings of the writer, before his name was known to the public.

"I cannot positively say, at this distance of time, whether at the period of our first acquaintance, the Kilmarnock edition of his poems had been just published, or was yet in the press. I suspect that the latter was the case, as I have still in my possession copies in his own handwriting of some of his favourite performances; particularly of his verses 'On the turning up a Mouse with his Plough;' 'On the Mountain Daisy;' and 'The Lament.' On my return to Edinburgh, I showed the volume, and mentioned what I knew of the author's history to several of my friends; and, among others, to Mr Henry Mackenzie, who first recommended him to public notice in the 97th number of 'The Lounger.'

"At this time Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation, not however without lamenting that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or gauger in his own country.

"His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth: but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him: and listened with apparent attention and deference on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance; and his dread of anything approaching to meanness or servility rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments, than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language, when he spoke in company; more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided more successfully than most Scotchmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology.

"He came to Edinburgh early in the winter following, and remained there for several months. By whose advice he took this step, I am unable to say. Perhaps it was suggested only by his own curiosity to see a little more of the world; but, I confess, I dreaded the consequences from the first, and always wished that his pursuits and habits should continue the same as in the former part of life; with the addition of, what I considered as then completely within his reach, a good farm on moderate terms, in a part of the country agreeable to his taste.

"The attentions he received during his stay in town, from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country; nor did he seem to feel

any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance. His dress was perfectly suited to his station, plain, and unpretending, with a sufficient attention to neatness. If I recollect right, he always wore boots; and, when on more than usual ceremony, buckskin breeches.

"The variety of his engagements, while in Edinburgh, prevented me from seeing him so often as I could have wished. In the course of the spring, he called on me once or twice, at my request, early in the morning, and walked with me to Braid Hills, in the neighbourhood of the town, when he charmed me still more by his private conversation, than he had ever done in company. He was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.

"In his political principles he was then a Jacobite; which was perhaps owing partly to this, that his father was originally from the estate of Lord Mareschal. Indeed, he did not appear to have thought much on such subjects, nor very consistently. He had a very strong sense of religion, and expressed deep regret at the levity with which he had heard it treated occasionally in some convivial meetings which he frequented. I speak of him as he was in the winter of 1786-7; for afterwards we met but seldom, and our conversation turned chiefly on his literary projects, or his private affairs.

"I do not recollect whether it appears or not from any of your letters to me, that you had ever seen Burns. If you have, it is superfluous for me to add, that the idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind, exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. Among the poets whom I have happened to know, I have been struck, in more than one instance, with the unaccountable disparity between their general talents, and the occasional inspirations of their more favourable moments. But all the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper, than a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.

"Among the subjects on which he was accustomed to dwell, the characters of the individuals with whom he happened to meet was plainly a favourite one. The remarks he made on them were always shrewd and pointed, though frequently inclining too much to sarcasm. His praise of those he loved was sometimes indiscriminate and extravagant; but this, I suspect, proceeded rather from the caprice and humour of the moment, than from the effects of attachment in blinding his judgment. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding; but to my taste, not often pleasing or happy. His attempts at epigram, in

his printed works, are the only performances, perhaps, that he has produced, totally unworthy of his genius.

"In summer 1787, I passed some weeks in Ayrshire, and saw Burns occasionally. I think that he made a pretty long excursion that season to the Highlands, and that he also visited what Beattie calls the Arcadian ground of Scotland, upon the banks of the Teviot and the Tweed.

"I should have mentioned before, that notwithstanding various reports I heard during the preceding winter, of Burns's predilection for convivial, and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me indeed himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him entirely of any merit in his temperance. I was, however, somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed, by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject.

"In the course of the same season, I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a mason-lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short, unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. If I am not mistaken, he told me, that in that village, before going to Edinburgh, he had belonged to a small club of such of the inhabitants as had a taste for books, when they used to converse and debate on any interesting questions that occurred to them in the course of their reading. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution.

"I must not omit to mention, what I have always considered as characteristical in a high degree of true genius, the extreme facility and good-nature of his taste, in judging of the compositions of others, where there was any real ground for praise. I repeated to him many passages of English poetry with which he was unacquainted, and have more than once witnessed the tears of admiration and rapture with which he heard them. The collection of songs by Dr Aiken, which I first put into his hands, he read with unmixed delight, notwithstanding his former efforts in that very difficult species of writing; and I have little doubt that it had some effect in polishing his subsequent compositions.

"In judging of prose, I do not think his taste was equally sound. I once read to him a passage or two in Franklin's Works, which I thought very happily executed, upon the model of Addison; but he did not appear to relish, or to perceive the beauty which they derived from their exquisite simplicity, and spoke of them with indifference, when compared with the point, and antithesis, and quaintness of Junius. The influence of this taste is very per-

ceptible in his own prose compositions, although their great and various excellences render some of them scarcely less objects of wonder than his poetical performances. The late Dr Robertson used to say, that, considering his education, the former seemed to him the more extraordinary of the two.

"His memory was uncommonly retentive, at least for poetry, of which he recited to me frequently long compositions with the most minute accuracy. They were chiefly ballads, and other pieces in our Scottish dialect: great part of them, he told me, he had learned in his childhood from his mother; who delighted in such recitations, and whose poetical taste, rude as it probably was, gave, it is presumable, the first direction to her son's genius.

"Of the more polished verses which accidentally fell into his hands in his early years, he mentioned particularly the recommendatory poems, by different authors, prefixed to Hervey's Meditations; a book which has always had a very wide circulation among such of the country people of Scotland as affect to unite some degree of taste with their religious studies. And these poems (although they are certainly below mediocrity) he continued to read with a degree of rapture beyond expression. He took notice of this fact himself, as a proof how much the taste is liable to be influenced by accidental circumstances.

"His father appeared to me from the account he gave of him, to have been a respectable and worthy character, possessed of a mind superior to what might have been expected from his station in life. He ascribed much of his own principles and feelings to the early impressions he had received from his instruction and example. I recollect that he once applied to *him* (and he added, that the passage was a literal statement of fact) the two last lines of the following passage in the 'Minstrel:' the whole of which he repeated with great enthusiasm:—

> 'Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
> When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive;
> Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
> Bid him, though doom'd to perish, hope to live?
> Is it for this fair virtue oft must strive,
> With disappointment, penury, and pain?
> No! Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive;
> And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
> Bright through the eternal year of love's triumphant reign
>
> *'This truth sublime, his simple sire had taught:*
> *In sooth, 'twas almost all the shepherd knew.'*

"With respect to Burns's early education, I cannot say anything with certainty. He always spoke with respect and gratitude of the schoolmaster who had taught him to read English; and who, finding in his scholar a more than ordinary ardour for knowledge, had been at pains to instruct him in the grammatical principles of the language. He began the study of Latin, but dropt it before he had finished the verbs. I have sometimes heard him quote a few

Latin words, such as *omnia vincit amor*, &c., but they seemed to be such as he had caught from conversation, and which he repeated by *rote*. I think he had a project, after he came to Edinburgh, of prosecuting the study under his intimate friend, the late Mr Nicol, one of the masters of the grammar school here; but I do not know that he ever proceeded so far as to make the attempt.

"He certainly possessed a smattering of French; and, if he had an affectation in anything, it was in introducing occasionally a word or phrase from that language. It is possible that his knowledge in this respect might be more extensive than I suppose it to be; but this you can learn from his more intimate acquaintance. It would be worth while to inquire, whether he was able to read the French authors with such facility as to receive from them any improvement to his taste. For my own part, I doubt it much; nor would I believe it, but on very strong and pointed evidence.

"If my memory does not fail me, he was well instructed in arithmetic, and knew something of practical geometry, particularly of surveying. All his other attainments were entirely his own.

"The last time I saw him was during the winter 1788–89, when he passed an evening with me at Drumsengh, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where I was then living. My friend Mr Alison was the only other person in company. I never saw him more agreeable or interesting. A present which Mr Alison sent him afterwards of his 'Essays on Taste,' drew from Burns a letter of acknowledgment which I remember to have read with some degree of surprise at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed of the general principles of the doctrine of association. When I saw Mr Alison in Shropshire last autumn, I forgot to inquire if the letter be still in existence. If it is, you may easily procure it, by means of our friend Mr Houlbrooke."

SKETCH BY PROFESSOR WALKER,

AUTHOR OF A LIFE OF THE POET.

After stating that Burns was simple and natural in society, and never assumed airs of superiority, he says:—"Though he took his full share in conversation, not only from a perception that it was expected, but from a consciousness that it would gratify expectation, yet he did so in a manner that was dignified and manly, and altogether remote from petulant vanity, or offensive exultation in an importance so new to him. His deportment was plain without vulgarity; and though it had little softness, and showed him ready to repel any insult with decision at least, if not with roughness, yet he soon made it evident that those who behaved to him with propriety were in no danger of any unprovoked or boorish rudeness."

The Professor having first met Burns at Dr Blacklock's at break-

fast, says:—"I was not much struck with his first appearance, as I had previously heard it described. His person, though strong and well knit, and much superior to what might be expected in a ploughman, was still rather coarse in its outline. His stature, from want of setting up, appeared to be only of the middle size, but was rather above it. His motions were firm and decided; and though without any pretensions to grace, were at the same time so free from clownish constraint, as to show that he had not always been confined to the society of his profession. His countenance was not of that elegant cast which is most frequent among the upper ranks; but it was manly and intelligent, and marked by a thoughtful gravity, which shaded at times into sternness. In his large dark eye the most striking index of his genius resided. It was full of mind, and would have been singularly expressive, under the management of one who could employ it with more art, for the purpose of expression.

"He was plainly, but properly dressed, in a style midway between the holiday-costume of a farmer and that of the company with which he now associated. His black hair, without powder, at a time when it was very generally worn, was tied behind, and spread upon his forehead. Upon the whole, from his person, physiognomy, and dress, had I met him near a seaport, and been required to guess his condition, I should have probably conjectured him to be the master of a merchant-vessel of the most respectable class.

"In no part of his manner was there the slightest degree of affectation; nor could a stranger have suspected, from anything in his behaviour or conversation, that he had been for some months the favourite of all the fashionable circles of a metropolis.

"In conversation he was powerful. His conceptions and expression were of corresponding vigour, and on all subjects were as remote as possible from commonplaces. Though somewhat authoritative, it was in a way which gave little offence, and was readily imputed to his inexperience in those modes of smoothing dissent and softening assertion which are important characteristics of polished manners. After breakfast, I requested him to communicate some of his unpublished pieces. . . . . I paid particular attention to his recitation, which was plain, slow, articulate, and forcible, but without any eloquence or art. He did not always lay the emphasis with propriety, nor did he humour the sentiment by the variations of his voice. He was standing, during the time, with his face towards the window, to which, and not to his auditors, he directed his eye; thus depriving himself of any additional effect which the language of his composition might have borrowed from the language of his countenance. In this he resembled the generality of singers in ordinary company, who, to shun any charge of affectation, withdraw all meaning from their features, and lose the advantage by which vocal performers on the stage augment the impression and give energy to the sentiment of the song.

"The day after my first introduction to Burns, I supped in com-

pany with him at Dr Blair's. The other guests were very few, and as each had been invited chiefly to have an opportunity of meeting with the poet, the doctor endeavoured to draw him out, and to make him the central figure of the group. Though he therefore furnished the greatest proportion of the conversation, he did no more than what he saw evidently was expected. Men of genius have often been taxed with a proneness to commit blunders in company, from that ignorance or negligence of the laws of conversation which must be imputed to the absorption of their thoughts in a favourite subject, or to the want of that daily practice in attending to the petty trades of behaviour which is incompatible with a studious life. From singularities of this sort Burns was unusually free; yet on the present occasion he made a more awkward slip than any that are reported of the poets or mathematicians most noted for absence. Being asked from which of the public places he had received the greatest gratification, he named the High Church, but gave the preference as a preacher to the colleague of our worthy entertainer, whose celebrity rested on his pulpit eloquence, in a tone so pointed and decisive, as to throw the whole company into the most foolish embarrassment. The doctor, indeed, with becoming self-command, endeavoured to relieve the rest by cordially seconding the encomium so injudiciously introduced: but this did not prevent the conversation from labouring under that compulsory effort which was unavoidable, while the thoughts of all were full of the only subject on which it was improper to speak. Of this blunder Burns must instantly have been aware, but he showed the return of good sense by making no attempt to repair it. His secret mortification was indeed so great, that he never mentioned the circumstance until many years after, when he told me that his silence had proceeded from the pain which he felt in recalling it to his memory."

SKETCH BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The following was written for Lockhart's Life of the poet:—

"As for Burns, I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen, in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets whom he most frequented. Mr Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr Dugald Stewart. Of course, we youngsters sat silent, looked, and

istened. The only thing I remember, which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath :—

> 'Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,
> Gave the sad presage of his future years,
> The child of misery baptized in tears.'

"Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered, that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of 'The Justice of Peace.' I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.

"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr Nasmyth's picture; but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school: *i.e.*, none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted; nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

"I remem , on this occasion, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Fergusson, he talked of

them with too much humility as his models: there was, doubtless, national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the laird. I do not speak *in malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."

TWO SKETCHES BY MRS RIDDEL OF WOODLEY PARK,

A NEIGHBOUR AND WARM FRIEND OF THE POET'S.

The firs Sketch occurred in a letter to a friend: the last was contributed to the columns of the *Dumfries Journal* a short time after the poet's death.

"I was struck," says this lady, (in a confidential letter to a friend, written soon after,) "with his appearance on entering the room. The stamp of death was imprinted on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, 'Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?' I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest, and I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. (I was then in a bad state of health.) He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his accustomed sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present situation, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling, as an event likely to happen very soon: and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in so interesting a situation—in hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. He mentioned, with seeming pride and satisfaction, the promising genius of his eldest son, and the flattering marks of approbation he had received from his teachers, and dwelt particularly on his hopes of that boy's future conduct and merit. His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy upon him, and the more perhaps from the reflection that he had not done them all the justice he was so well qualified to do. Passing from this subject, he showed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his

posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation; that letters and verses, written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malevolence, when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, or prevent the censures of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious sarcasms of envy, from pouring forth all their venom to blast his fame.

"He lamented that he had written many epigrams on persons against whom he entertained no enmity, and whose characters he should be sorry to wound: and many indifferent poetical pieces, which he feared would now, with all their imperfections on their head, be thrust upon the world. On this account he deeply regretted having deferred to put his papers in a state of arrangement, as he was now quite incapable of the exertion." The lady goes on to mention many other topics of a private nature on which he spoke. "The conversation," she adds, "was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I had seldom seen his mind greater or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and dejection I could not disguise damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed not unwilling to indulge.

"We parted about sunset on the evening of that day, (the 5th July 1796;) the next day I saw him again, and we parted to meet no more!"

"The attention of the public seems to be much occupied at present with the loss it has recently sustained in the death of the Caledonian poet, Robert Burns; a loss calculated to be severely felt throughout the literary world, as well as lamented in the narrower sphere of private friendship. It was not, therefore, probable, that such an event should be long unattended with the accustomed profusion of posthumous anecdotes and memoirs which are usually circulated immediately after the death of every rare and celebrated personage: I had, however, conceived no intention of appropriating to myself the privilege of criticising Burns's writings and character, or of anticipating on the province of a biographer.

"Conscious, indeed, of my own inability to do justice to such a subject, I should have continued wholly silent, had misrepresentation and calumny been less industrious; but a regard to truth, no less than affection for the memory of a friend, must now justify my offering to the public a few at least of those observations which an intimate acquaintance with Burns, and the frequent opportunities I have had of observing equally his happy qualities and his failings for several years past, have enabled me to communicate.

"It will actually be an injustice done to Burns's character, not

only by future generations and foreign countries, but even by his native Scotland, and perhaps a number of his contemporaries, that he is generally talked of, and considered, with reference to his poetical talents *only:* for the fact is, even allowing his great and original genius its due tribute of admiration, that poetry (I appeal to all who have had the advantage of being personally acquainted with him) was actually not his *forte.* Many others, perhaps, may have ascended to prouder heights in the region of Parnassus, but none certainly ever outshone Burns in the charms —the sorcery, I would almost call it, of fascinating conversation, the spontaneous eloquence of social argument, or the unstudied poignancy of brilliant repartee: nor was any man, I believe, ever gifted with a larger portion of the '*vivida vis animi.*' His personal endowments were perfectly correspondent to the qualifications of his mind; his form was manly; his action, energy itself; devoid in a great measure perhaps of those graces, of that polish, acquired only in the refinement of societies where in early life he could have no opportunities of mixing: but where such was the irresistible power of attraction that encircled him, though his appearance and manners were always peculiar, he never failed to delight and to excel. His figure seemed to bear testimony to his earlier destination and employments. It seemed rather moulded by nature for the rough exercises of agriculture, than the gentler cultivation of the belles lettres. His features were stamped with the hardy character of independence, and the firmness of conscious, though not arrogant, pre-eminence; the animated expressions of countenance were almost peculiar to himself: the rapid lightnings of his eye were always the harbingers of some flash of genius, whether they darted the fiery glances of insulted and indignant superiority, or beamed with the impassioned sentiment of fervent and impetuous affections. His voice alone could improve upon the magic of his eye: sonorous, replete with the finest modulations, it alternately captivated the ear with the melody of poetic numbers, the perspicuity of nervous reasoning, or the ardent sallies of enthusiastic patriotism. The keenness of satire was, I am almost at a loss whether to say, his forte or his foible; for though nature had endowed him with a portion of the most pointed excellence in that dangerous talent, he suffered it too often to be the vehicle of personal, and sometimes unfounded animosities. It was not always that sportiveness of humour, that 'unwary pleasantry,' which Sterne has depicted with touches so conciliatory, but the darts of ridicule were frequently directed as the caprice of the instant suggested, or as the altercations of parties and of persons happened to kindle the restlessness of his spirit into interest or aversion. This, however, was not invariably the case; his wit (which is no unusual matter indeed) had always the start of his judgment, and would lead him to the indulgence of raillery uniformly acute, but often accompanied with the least desire to wound. The suppression of an arch and full-pointed *bon-mot,* from the dread of offending its object,

the sage of Zurich very properly classes as a virtue *only to be sought for in the Calendar of Saints;* if so, Burns must not be too severely dealt with for being rather deficient in it. He paid for his mischievous wit as dearly as any one could do. "'Twas no extravagant arithmetic,' to say of him, as was said of Yorick, that 'for every ten jokes he got a hundred enemies:' but much allowance will be made by a candid mind for the splenetic warmth of a spirit whom 'distress had spited with the world,' and which, unbounded in its intellectual sallies and pursuits, continually experienced the curbs imposed by the waywardness of his fortune. The vivacity of his wishes and temper was indeed checked by almost habitual disappointments, which sat heavy on a heart that acknowledged the ruling passion of independence, without having ever been placed beyond the grasp of penury. His soul was never languid or inactive, and his genius was extinguished only with the last spark of retreating life. His passions rendered him, according as they disclosed themselves in affection or antipathy, an object of enthusiastic attachment, or of decided enmity; for *he* possessed none of that negative insipidity of character, whose love might be regarded with indifference, or whose resentment could be considered with contempt. In this, it should seem, the temper of his associates took the tincture from his own; for *he* acknowledged in the universe but two classes of objects, those of adoration the most fervent, or of aversion the most uncontrollable; and it has been frequently a reproach to him, that, susceptible of indifference, often hating where he ought only to have despised, he alternately opened his heart and poured forth the treasures of his understanding to such as were incapable of appreciating the homage; and elevated to the privileges of an adversary some who were unqualified in all respects for the honour of a contest so distinguished.

"It is said that the celebrated Dr Johnson professed to 'love a good hater,'—a temperament that would have singularly adapted him to cherish a prepossession in favour of our bard, who perhaps fell but little short even of the surly doctor in this qualification, as long as the disposition to ill-will continued: but the warmth of his passions was fortunately corrected by their versatility. He was seldom, indeed never, implacable in his resentments, and sometimes, it has been alleged, not inviolably faithful in his engagements of friendship. Much, indeed, has been said about his inconstancy and caprice; but I am inclined to believe that they originated less in a levity of sentiment, than from an extreme impetuosity of feeling, which rendered him prompt to take umbrage; and his sensations of pique, where he fancied he had discovered the traces of neglect, scorn, or unkindness, took their measure of asperity from the overflowings of the opposite sentiment which preceded them, and which seldom failed to regain its ascendancy in his bosom on the return of calmer reflection. He was candid and manly in the avowal of his errors, and *his avowal* was a *reparation*. His native *fierté* never forsaking him for a moment, the value of a frank acknowledgment

was enhanced tenfold towards a generous mind, from its never being attended with servility. His mind organised only for the stronger and more acute operations of the passions, was impracticable to the efforts of superciliousness that would have depressed it into humility, and equally superior to the encroachments of venal suggestions, that might have led him into the mazes of hypocrisy.

"It has been observed, that he was far from averse to the incense of flattery, and could receive it tempered with less delicacy than might have been expected, as he seldom transgressed extravagantly in that way himself; where he paid a compliment, it might indeed claim the power of intoxication, as approbation from him was always an honest tribute from the warmth and sincerity of his heart. It has been sometimes represented by those who, it should seem, had a view to depreciate, though they could not hope wholly to obscure that native brilliancy, which the powers of this extraordinary man had invariably bestowed on everything that came from his lips or pen, that the history of an Ayrshire plough-boy was an ingenious fiction, fabricated for the purposes of obtaining the interests of the great, and enhancing the merits of what required no foil. 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' 'Tam O'Shanter,' and 'The Mountain Daisy,' besides a number of later productions, where the maturity of his genius will be readily traced, and which will be given to the public as soon as his friends have collected and arranged them, speak sufficiently for themselves; and had they fallen from a hand more dignified in the ranks of society than that of a peasant, they had, perhaps, bestowed as unusual a grace there as even in the humbler shade of rustic inspiration from whence they really sprung.

"To the obscure scene of Burns's education, and to the laborious, though honourable station of rural industry, in which his parentage enrolled him, almost every inhabitant of the south of Scotland can give testimony. His only surviving brother, Gilbert Burns, now guides the ploughshare of his forefathers in Ayrshire, at a farm near Mauchline; and our poet's eldest son (a lad of nine years of age, whose early dispositions already prove him to be in some measure the inheritor of his father's talents as well as indigence) has been destined by his family to the humble employment of the loom.

"That Burns had received no classical education, and was acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors only through the medium of translations, is a fact of which all who were in the habit of conversing with him might readily be convinced. I have, indeed, seldom observed him to be at a loss in conversation, unless where the dead languages and their writers have been the subjects of discussion. When I have pressed him to tell me, why he never applied himself to acquire the Latin, in particular, a language which his happy memory would have so soon enabled him to be master of, he used only to reply with a smile, that he had already learned all the Latin he desired to know, and that was *omnia vincit amor*; a sentence, that from his writings and most favourite pursuits, it should undoubtedly seem that he was most thoroughly

versed in; but I really believe his classic erudition extended little, if any, further.

"The penchant Burns had uniformly acknowledged for the festive pleasures of the table, and towards the fairer and softer objects of nature's creation, has been the rallying point from whence the attacks of his censors have been uniformly directed: and to these, it must be confessed, he showed himself no stoic. His poetical pieces blend with alternate happiness of description, the frolic spirit of the flowing bowl, or melt the heart to the tender and impassioned sentiments in which beauty always taught him to pour forth his own. But who would wish to reprove the feelings he has consecrated with such lively touches of nature? And where is the rugged moralist who will persuade us so far to 'chill the genial current of the soul,' as to regret that Ovid ever celebrated his Corinna, or that Anacreon sung beneath his vine?

"I will not, however, undertake to be the apologist of the irregularities even of a man of genius, though I believe it is as certain that genius never was free from irregularities, as that their absolution may, in a great measure, be justly claimed, since it is perfectly evident that the world had continued very stationary in its intellectual acquirements, had it never given birth to any but men of plain sense. Evenness of conduct, and a due regard to the decorums of the world, have been so rarely seen to move hand in hand with genius, that some have gone as far as to say, though there I cannot wholly acquiesce, that they are even incompatible; besides, the frailties that cast their shade over the splendour of superior merit, are more conspicuously glaring than where they are the attendants of mere mediocrity. It is only on the gem we are disturbed to see the dust; the pebble may be soiled, and we never regard it. The eccentric intuitions of genius too often yield the soul to the wild effervescence of desires, always unbounded, and sometimes equally dangerous to the repose of others as fatal to its own. No wonder then, if virtue herself be sometime lost in the blaze of kindling animation, or that the calm monitions of reason are not invariably found sufficient to fetter an imagination, which scorns the narrow limits and restrictions that would chain it to the level of ordinary minds. The child of nature, the child of sensibility, unschooled in the rigid precepts of philosophy, too often unable to control the passions which proved a source of frequent errors and misfortunes to him, Burns made his own artless apology in language more impressive than all the argumentatory vindications in the world could do, in one of his own poems, where he delineates the gradual expansion of his mind to the lessons of the 'tutelary muse,' who concludes an address to her pupil, almost unique for simplicity and beautiful poetry, with these lines:—

'I saw thy pulse's madd'ning play,
Wild send thee pleasure's devious way,
Misled by fancy's meteor ray,
By passion driven;

But yet the light that led astray
Was *light from heaven.*

"I have already transgressed beyond the bounds I had proposed to myself, on first committing this sketch to paper, which comprehends what at least I have been led to deem the leading features of Burns's mind and character; a literary critique I do not aim at; mine is wholly fulfilled, if in these pages I have been able to delineate any of those strong traits that distinguished him, of those talents which raised him from the plough, where he passed the bleak morning of his life, weaving his rude wreaths of poesy with the wild field flowers that sprang around his cottage, to that enviable eminence of literary fame, where Scotland will long cherish his memory with delight and gratitude: and proudly remember that beneath her cold sky a genius was ripened, without care or culture, that would have done honour to climes more favourable to those luxuriances—that warmth of colouring and fancy in which he so eminently excelled.

"From several paragraphs I have noticed in the public prints, ever since the idea of sending this sketch to some one of them was formed, I find private animosities have not yet subsided, and that envy has not yet exhausted all her shafts. I still trust, however, that honest fame will be permanently affixed to Burns's character, which I think it will be found he *has* merited by the candid and impartial among his countrymen. And where a recollection of the imprudence that sullied his brighter qualifications interpose, let the imperfection of all human excellence be remembered at the same time, leaving those inconsistencies, which alternately exalted his nature into the seraph, and sunk it again into the man, to the tribunal which *alone* can investigate the labyrinths of the human heart—

'Where they alike in trembling hope repose,—
The bosom of his father and his God'—GRAY'S *Elegy*.

"ANNANDALE, *Aug.* 7, 1796."

ACCOUNT BY DR ADAIR OF A JOURNEY WITH THE POET.

Dr James Adair was a relative of Mrs Dunlop's and a great admirer of the poet's genius.

"Burns and I left Edinburgh together in August 1787. We rode by Linlithgow and Carron, to Stirling. We visited the ironworks at Carron, with which the poet was forcibly struck. The resemblance between that place and its inhabitants to the cave of the Cyclops, which must have occurred to every classical reader, presented itself to Burns. At Stirling the prospect from the castle strongly interested him; in a former visit to which, his national feelings had been power

fully excited by the ruinous and roofless state of the hall in which the Scottish parliaments had been held. His indignation had vented itself in some imprudent, but not unpoetical lines, which had given much offence, and which he took this opportunity of erasing, by breaking the pane of the window at the inn on which they were written.

"At Stirling we met with a company of travellers from Edinburgh, among whom was a character in many respects congenial to that of Burns. This was Nicol, one of the teachers of the High Grammar-School at Edinburgh—the same wit and power of conversation; the same fondness for convivial society, and thoughtlessness of to-morrow, characterised both. Jacobitical principles in politics were common to both of them; and these have been suspected, since the revolution of France, to have given place in each, to opinions apparently opposite. I regret that I have preserved no *memorabilia* of their conversation, either on this or on other occasions, when I happened to meet them together. Many songs were sung, which I mention for the sake of observing, that when Burns was called on in his turn, he was accustomed, instead of singing, to recite one or other of his own shorter poems, with a tone and emphasis which, though not correct or harmonious, were impressive and pathetic. This he did on the present occasion.

"From Stirling we went next morning through the romantic and fertile vale of Devon to Harvieston in Clackmannanshire, then inhabited by Mrs Hamilton, with the younger part of whose family Burns had been previously acquainted. He introduced me to the family, and there was formed my first acquaintance with Mrs Hamilton's eldest daughter, to whom I have been married for nine years. Thus was I indebted to Burns for a connexion from which I have derived, and expect further to derive, much happiness.

"During a residence of about ten days at Harvieston, we made excursions to visit various parts of the surrounding scenery, inferior to none in Scotland, in beauty, sublimity, and romantic interest; particularly Castle Campbell, the ancient seat of the family of Argyle; and the famous Cataract of the Devon, called the Caldron Linn; and the Rumbling Bridge, a single broad arch, thrown by the devil, if tradition is to be believed, across the river, at about the height of a hundred feet above its bed. I am surprised that none of these scenes should have called forth an exertion of Burns's muse. But I doubt if he had much taste for the picturesque. I well remember, that the ladies at Harvieston, who accompanied us on this jaunt, expressed their disappointment at his not expressing in more glowing and fervid language, his impressions of the Caldron Linn scene, certainly highly sublime, and somewhat horrible.

"A visit to Mrs Bruce of Clackmannan, a lady above ninety, the lineal descendant of that race which gave the Scottish throne its brightest ornament, interested his feelings more powerfully. This venerable dame, with characteristical dignity, informed me, on my observing that I believed she was descended from the family of

Robert Bruce, that Robert Bruce was sprung from her family Though almost deprived of speech by a paralytic affection, she preserved her hospitality and urbanity. She was in possession of the hero's helmet and two-handed sword, with which she conferred on Burns and myself the honour of knighthood, remarking, that she had a better right to confer that title than *some people*. . . . You will, of course, conclude that the old lady's political tenets were as Jacobitical as the poet's, a conformity which contributed not a little to the cordiality of our reception and entertainment.—She gave us as her first toast after dinner, *Awa' Uncos*, or Away with the Strangers.—Who these strangers were, you will readily understand. Mrs A. corrects me by saying it should be *Hooi*, or *Hooi Uncos*, a sound used by shepherds to direct their dogs to drive away the sheep.

"We returned to Edinburgh by Kinross (on the shore of Lochleven) and Queensferry. I am inclined to think Burns knew nothing of poor Michael Bruce, who was then alive at Kinross, or had died there a short while before. A meeting between the bards, or a visit to the deserted cottage and early grave of poor Bruce, would have been highly interesting.

"At Dunfermline we visited the ruined abbey and the abbey church, now consecrated to Presbyterian worship. Here I mounted the *cutty stool*, or stool of repentance, assuming the character of a penitent for fornication; while Burns from the pulpit addressed to me a ludicrous reproof and exhortation, parodied from that which had been delivered to himself in Ayrshire, where he had, as he assured me, once been one of seven who mounted the *seat of shame* together.

"In the churchyard two broad flagstones marked the grave of Robert Bruce, for whose memory Burns had more than common veneration He knelt and kissed the stone with sacred fervour, and heartily (*suus ut mos erat*) execrated the worse than Gothic neglect of the first of Scottish heroes."

SKETCHES BY MR RAMSAY OF OCHTERTYRE.

Burns was introduced to Mr Ramsay of Ochtertyre by Dr Blacklock, and visited that gentleman at his country seat in 1787 and 1790.

"I have been in the company of many men of genius," says Mr Ramsay, "some of them poets; but never witnessed such flashes of intellectual brightness as from him, the impulse of the moment, sparks of celestial fire! I never was more delighted, therefore, than with his company for two days, *tête-a-tête*. In a mixed company I should have made little of him; for, in the gamester's phrase, he did not always know when to play off and when to play on. . . . I

not only proposed to him the writing of a play similar to the Gentle Shepherd, *qualem decet esse sororem*, but *Scottish Georgics*, a subject which Thomson has by no means exhausted in his Seasons. What beautiful landscapes of rural life and manners might not have been expected from a pencil so faithful and forcible as his, which could have exhibited scenes as familiar and interesting as those in the Gentle Shepherd, which every one who knows our swains in their unadulterated state, instantly recognises as true to nature. But to have executed either of these plans, steadiness and abstraction from company were wanting, not talents. When I asked him whether the Edinburgh literati had mended his poems by their criticisms,—'Sir,' said he, 'these gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country, who spin their thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.' He said he had not changed a word except one, to please Dr Blair."

"I had an adventure with him in the year 1790," says Mr Ramsay of Ochtertyre, "when passing through Dumfriesshire, on a tour to the south, with Dr Stewart of Luss. Seeing him pass quickly, near Closeburn, I said to my companion, 'That is Burns.' On coming to the inn, the hostler told us he would be back in a few hours to grant permits; that where he met with anything seizable he was no better than any other gauger; in everything else, that he was perfectly a gentleman. After leaving a note to be delivered to him on his return, I proceeded to his house, being curious to see his Jean, &c. I was much pleased with his *uxor Sabina qualis*, and the poet's modest mansion, so unlike the habitation of ordinary rustics. In the evening he suddenly bounced in upon us, and said, as he entered, 'I come, to use the language of Shakespeare, "stewed in haste."' In fact, he had ridden incredibly fast after receiving my note. We fell into conversation directly, and soon got into the *mare magnum* of poetry. He told me that he had now gotten a story for a drama, which he was to call 'Rob Macquechan's Elshon,' from a popular story of Robert Bruce being defeated on the water of Caern, when the heel of his boot having loosened in his flight, he applied to Robert Macquechan to fit it; who, to make sure, ran his awl nine inches up the king's heel. We were now going on at a great rate, when Mr S—— popped in his head, which put a stop to our discourse, which had become very interesting. Yet in a little while it was resumed; and such was the force and versatility of the bard's genius, that he made the tears run down Mr S——'s cheeks, albeit unused to the poetic strain. . . . . From that time we met no more, and I was grieved at the reports of him afterwards. Poor Burns! we shall hardly ever see his like again. He was, in truth, a sort of comet in literature, irregular in its motions, which did not do good proportioned to the blaze of light it displayed."

ACCOUNT BY MR SYME OF A JOURNEY WITH THE POET.

This gentleman was one of Burns's most intimate friends, and one of his executors after his decease.

"I got Burns a gray Highland shelty to ride on. We dined the first day, 27th July 1793, at Glendenwynes of Parton; a beautiful situation on the banks of the Dee. In the evening we walked out, and ascended a gentle eminence, from which we had as fine a view of Alpine scenery as can well be imagined. A delightful soft evening showed all its wilder as well as its grander graces. Immediately opposite, and within a mile of us, we saw Airds, a charming romantic place, where dwelt Low, the author of 'Mary, weep no more for me.' This was classical ground for Burns. He viewed 'the highest hill which rises o'er the source of Dee;' and would have stayed till 'the passing spirit' had appeared, had we not resolved to reach Kenmure that night. We arrived as Mr and Mrs Gordon were sitting down to supper.

"Here is a genuine baron's seat. The castle, an old building, stands on a large natural moat. In front, the river Ken winds for several miles through the most fertile and beautiful *holm*, till it expands into a lake twelve miles long, the banks of which on the south present a fine and soft landscape of green knolls, natural wood, and here and there a gray rock. On the north, the aspect is great, wild, and, I may say, tremendous. In short, I can scarcely conceive a scene more terribly romantic than the castle of Kenmure. Burns thinks so highly of it, that he meditates a description of it in poetry. Indeed, I believe he has begun the work. We spent three days with Mr Gordon, whose polished hospitality is of an original and endearing kind. Mrs Gordon's lap-dog, *Echo*, was dead. She would have an epitaph for him. Several had been made. Burns was asked for one. This was setting Hercules to his distaff. He disliked the subject: but, to please the lady, he would try. Here is what he produced:—

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore,
Now half extinct your powers of song,
Sweet Echo is no more.

'Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys!
Now half your din of tuneless song
With Echo silent lies'

"We left Kenmure, and went to Gatehouse. I took him the moor road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark. The hollow winds sighed, the lightnings gleamed, the thunder rolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene—he spoke not a word, but seemed wrapt in meditation. In a little

while the rain began to fall; it poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements 'rumble their belly full' upon our defenceless heads Oh! oh! 'twas foul. We got utterly wet; and, to revenge ourselves, Burns insisted at Gatehouse on our getting utterly drunk.

"From Gatehouse, we went next day to Kirkcudbright, through a fine country. But here I must tell you that Burns had got a pair of *jemmy* boots for the country, which had been thoroughly wet, and which had been dried in such manner that it was not possible to get them on again. The brawny poet tried force, and tore them to shreds. A whiffling vexation of this sort is more trying to the temper than a serious calamity. We were going to St Mary's Isle, the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, and the forlorn Burns was discomfited at the thought of his ruined boots. A sick stomach and a headache lent their aid, and the man of verse was quite *accablé*. I attempted to reason with him. Mercy on us! how he did fume with rage! Nothing could reinstate him in temper. I tried various experiments, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I showed him the house of ——, across the bay of Wigton. Against ——, with whom he was offended, he expectorated his spleen, and regained a most agreeable temper. He was in a most epigrammatic humour indeed! He afterwards fell on humbler game. There is one —— whom he does not love. He had a pas-ing blow at him:—

> 'When ——, deceased, to the devil went down,
> 'Twas nothing would serve him but Satan's own crown:
> Thy fool's head, quoth Satan, that crown shall wear never,
> I grant thou'rt as wicked, but not quite so clever.'

"Well, I am to bring you to Kirkcudbright along with our poet, without boots. I carried the torn ruins across my saddle in spite of his fulminations, and in contempt of appearances; and what is more, Lord Selkirk carried them in his coach to Dumfries. He insisted they were worth mending.

"We reached Kirkcudbright about one o'clock. I had promised that we should dine with one of the first men in our country, J. Dalzell. But Burns was in a wild and obstreperous humour, and swore he would not dine where he should be under the smallest restraint. We prevailed, therefore, on Mr Dalzell to dine with us in the inn, and had a very agreeable party. In the evening we set out for St Mary's Isle. Robert had not absolutely regained the milkiness of good temper, and it occurred once or twice to him, as he rode along, that St Mary's Isle was the seat of a lord; yet that lord was not an aristocrat, at least in his sense of the word. We arrived about eight o'clock, as the family were at tea and coffee. St Mary's Isle is one of the most delightful places that can, in my opinion, be formed by the assemblage of every soft, but not tame, object which constitutes natural and cultivated beauty. But not to dwell on its external graces, let me tell you that we found all the ladies of the family (all beautiful) at home, and some strangers; and, among others, who but Urbani! The Italian sung us many Scot-

tish songs, accompanied with instrumental music. The two young ladies of Selkirk sung also. We had the song of Lord Gregory, which I asked for, to have an opportunity of calling on Burns to recite *his* ballad to that tune. He did recite it; and such was the effect, that a dead silence ensued. It was such a silence as a mind of feeling naturally preserves when it is touched with that enthusiasm which banishes every other thought but the contemplation and indulgence of the sympathy produced. Burns's 'Lord Gregory' is, in my opinion, a most beautiful and affecting ballad. The fastidious critic may perhaps say, some of the sentiments and imagery are of too elevated a kind for such a style of composition; for instance, 'Thou bolt of heaven that passest by;' and 'Ye mustering thunder,' &c.; but this is a cold-blooded objection, which will be said rather than felt.

"We enjoyed a most happy evening at Lord Selkirk's. We had, in every sense of the word, a feast, in which our minds and our senses were equally gratified. The poet was delighted with his company, and acquitted himself to admiration. The lion that had raged so violently in the morning, was now as mild and gentle as a lamb. Next day we returned to Dumfries, and so ends our peregrination. I told you, that in the midst of the storm, on the wilds of Kenmure, Burns was wrapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army, along with Bruce, at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner on our ride home from St Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell:—

'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' &c."

DOMESTIC SKETCH OF THE POET.

BY THE LATE SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART.

I had always been a great admirer of his genius and of many traits in his character; and I was aware that he was a person moody, and somewhat difficult to deal with. I was resolved to keep in full consideration the irritability of his position in society. About a mile from his residence, on a bench under a tree, I passed a figure, which from the engraved portraits of him I did not doubt was the poet; but I did not venture to address him. On arriving at his humble cottage, Mrs Burns opened the door; she was the plain sort of humble woman she has been described; she ushered me into a neat apartment, and said that she would send for Burns, who was gone for a walk. In about half an hour he came, and my conjecture proved right: he was the person I had seen on the bench by the roadside. At first I was not entirely pleased with his countenance. I thought it had a sort of capricious jealousy, as if he

was half inclined to treat me as an intruder. I resolved to bear it, and try if I could humour him. I let him choose his turn of conversation, but said a few words about the friend whose letter I had brought to him. It was now about four in the afternoon of an autumn day. While we were talking, Mrs Burns, as if accustomed to entertain visitors in this way, brought in a bottle of Scotch whisky, and set the table. I accepted this hospitality. I could not help observing the curious glance with which he watched me at the entrance of this signal of homely entertainment. He was satisfied; he filled our glasses. "Here's a health to auld Caledonia!" The fire sparkled in his eye, and mine sympathetically met his. He shook my hand with warmth, and we were friends at once. Then he drank "Erin for ever!" and the tear of delight burst from his eye. The fountain of his mind and his heart now opened at once, and flowed with abundant force almost till midnight. He had amazing acuteness of intellect, as well as glow of sentiment. I do not deny that he said some absurd things, and many coarse ones, and that his knowledge was very irregular, and sometimes too presumptuous, and that he did not endure contradiction with sufficient patience. His pride, and perhaps his vanity, was even morbid. I carefully avoided topics in which he could not take an active part. Of literary gossip he knew nothing, and therefore I kept aloof from it; in the technical parts of literature his opinions were crude and uninformed; but whenever he spoke of a great writer whom he had read, his taste was generally sound. To a few minor writers he gave more credit than they deserved. His great beauty was his manly strength, and his energy and elevation of thought and feeling. He had always a full mind, and all flowed from a genuine spring. I never conversed with a man who appeared to be more warmly impressed with the beauties of nature; and visions of female beauty and tenderness seemed to transport him. He did not merely appear to be a poet at casual intervals; but at every moment a poetical enthusiasm seemed to beat in his veins, and he lived all his days the inward, if not the outward, life of a poet. I thought I perceived in Burns's cheek the symptoms of an energy which had been pushed too far; and he had this feeling himself. Every now and then he spoke of the grave, as soon about to close over him. His dark eye had at first a character of sternness; but as he became warmed, though this did not entirely melt away, it was mingled with changes of extreme softness.

PERSONAL SKETCH OF THE POET.

BY ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

Burns, in his youth, was tall and sinewy, with coarse swarthy features, and a ready word of wit or of kindness for all. The man differed little from the lad; his form was vigorous, his limbs shapely.

his knees firmly knit, his arms muscular and round, his hands large, his fingers long, and he stood five feet ten inches high. All his movements were unconstrained and free:—he had a slight stoop of the neck; and a lock or so of his dark waving hair was tied carelessly behind with two casts of narrow black ribbon. His looks beamed with genius and intelligence; his forehead was broad and clear, shaded by raven locks inclined to curl; his cheeks were furrowed more with anxiety than time: his nose was short rather than long; his mouth firm and manly: his teeth white and regular; and there was a dimple, a small one, on his chin. His eyes were large, dark, and lustrous: I have heard them likened to coach-lamps approaching in a dark night, because they were first seen of any part of the poet. "I never saw," said Scott, "such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time." In his ordinary moods, Burns looked a man of a hundred; but when animated in company he was a man of a million: his swarthy features glowed; his eyes kindled up till they all but lightened; his slight stoop vanished; and his voice—deep, manly, and musical—added its sorcery of pathos or of wit, till the dullest owned the enchantments of genius.

His personal strength was united to great activity; he could move a twenty-stone sack of meal without much apparent effort, and load a cart with bags of corn in the time, one of his neighbours said, that other men were talking about it. A mason was hewing him a stone for a cheese-press, and Burns took pleasure, as a side was squared, to turn over the huge mass unaided. A large pebble is still pointed out at Ellisland, as his putting-stone; and though no living man at Nithsdale perhaps can poise it in the air, the tradition proves the popular belief in his great strength. He delighted in feats of rural activity and skill; he loved to draw the straightest furrow on his fields, to sow the largest quantity of seed-corn of any farmer in the dale in a day, mow the most rye-grass and clover in ten hours of exertion, and stook to the greatest number of reapers. In this he sometimes met with his match. After a hard strife on the harvest field with a fellow-husbandman, in which the poet was equalled:—"Robert," said his rival, "I'm no sae far behind this time, I'm thinking?"—"John," said he in a whisper, "you're behind in something yet: I made a sang while I was stooking!" I have heard my father say that Burns had the handsomest cast of the hand in sowing corn he ever saw on a furrowed field.

Burns desired as much to excel in conversation as he did in these fits and starts of husbandry; but he was more disposed to contend for victory than to seek for knowledge. The debating club of Torbolton was ever strong within him: a fierce lampoon, or a rough epigram, was often the reward of those who ventured to contradict him. His conversation partook of the nature of controversy, and he urged his opinions with a vehemence amounting to fierceness. All this was natural enough when he was involved in argument with the boors around him; but he was disposed, when pressed in debate

to be equally discourteous and unsparing to the polite and the titled.

In the company of men of talent he was another man; he was then among his peers, and listened with attention, and spoke with a modest eloquence which surprised many. "I think Burns," said Robertson the historian, to Professor Christison, "was one of the most extraordinary men I ever met with; his poetry surprised me very much, his prose surprised me still more, and his conversation surprised me more than both his poetry and prose." "His address," says Robert Riddel, "was pleasing; he was neither forward nor embarrassed in manner; his spirits were generally high, and his conversation animated. His language was fluent, frequently fine; his enunciation always rapid: his ideas clear and vigorous, and he had the rare power of modulating his peculiarly fine voice, so as to harmonise with whatever subject he touched upon. I have heard him talk with astonishing rapidity, nor miss the articulation of a single syllable; elevate and depress his voice as the topic seemed to require; and sometimes, when the subject was pathetic, he would prolong the words in the most impressive and affecting manner, indicative of the deep sensibility which inspired him. He often lamented to me that fortune had not placed him at the bar or in the senate; he had great ambition, and the feeling that he could not gratify it preyed upon him severely."

LETTER FROM MR FINDLATER,

COLLECTOR OF EXCISE, GLASGOW.

Mr Findlater was for some time a brother officer of the poet's, although of a higher grade, and a tried friend.

GLASGOW, *Oct.* 10, 1818.

SIR,—I entirely agree with you in opinion on the various accounts which have been given to the world of the life of Robert Burns, and can have no hesitation in expressing publicly my sentiments on his official conduct at least, and perhaps in other respects, as far as may appear necessary for the development of truth. Amongst his biographers, Dr Currie of course takes the lead, and the severity of his strictures, or, to borrow the words of the poet, his "iron-justice," is much to be regretted, as "his Life" has become a kind of text-book for succeeding commentators, who have, by the aid of their own fancies, amplified, exaggerated, and filled up the outlines he has sketched, and, in truth, left in such a state as to provoke an exercise of that description.

It is painful to trace all that has been written by Dr Currie's successors, who seem to have considered the history of the poet as a thing like Ulysses's bow, on which each was at liberty to try his strength, and some, in order to outdo their competitors, have

strained every nerve to throw all kinds of obloquy on his memory. His convivial habits, his wit and humour, his social talents, and independent spirit, have been perverted into constant and habitual drunkenness, impiety, neglect of his professional duty, and of his family, and in short every human vice. He has been branded with cowardice, accused of attempting murder, and even suicide, and all this without a shadow of proof, *proh pudor!*

Is there nothing of tenderness due to the memory of so transcendent a genius, who has so often delighted even his libellers with the felicities of his songs, and the charms of his wit and humour?—And is no regard to be had to the feelings of those near and dear relatives he has left behind; or, are his ashes never to "hope repose?"—My indignation has unwarily led me astray from the point to which I meant to have confined myself, and to which I will now recur, and briefly state what I have to say on the subject.

My connexion with Robert Burns commenced immediately after his admission into the Excise, and continued to the hour of his death. In all that time, the superintendence of his behaviour as an officer of the revenue was a branch of my especial province, and it may be supposed, I would not be an inattentive observer of the general conduct of a man and a poet so celebrated by his countrymen. In the former capacity, so far from its being "impossible for him to discharge the duties of his office with that regularity which is almost indispensable," as is palpably assumed by one of his biographers, and insinuated not very obscurely even by Dr Currie, he was exemplary in his attention as an Excise-officer, and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance; as a proof of which, it may not be foreign to the subject to quote part of a letter from him to myself, in a case of only *seeming* inattention. —"I know, sir, and regret deeply, that this business glances with a malign aspect on my character as an officer; but, as I am really innocent in the affair, and, as the gentleman is known to be an illicit dealer, and particularly as this is the single instance of the least shadow of carelessness or impropriety in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall a sacrifice to the dark manœuvres of a smuggler." This of itself affords more than a presumption of his attention to business, as it cannot be supposed that he would have written in such a style to me, but from the impulse of a conscious rectitude in this department of his duty. Indeed it was not till near the latter end of his days that there was any falling off in this respect, and this was amply accounted for in the pressure of disease, and accumulating infirmities. About this period I advised him to relinquish business altogether, which he complied with, but it distressed him a good deal, as he was thereby liable to suffer a diminution of salary; and he wrote to Commissioner Graham, in the hope that that gentleman's influence would get his full pay continued during his illness, which I have no doubt it would have done if he had recovered. In the meantime, Mr Graham wrote him a letter, exhibiting a solid

proof of his generosity and friendship, but, alas! the poet was by this time too far gone towards that "undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns," and he could not acknowledge it.

Having stated Burns's unremitting attention to business, which certainly was not compatible with perpetual intoxication, it follows of course that this latter charge must fall to the ground; and I will farther avow, that I never saw him, which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more so, almost every day, after he removed to Dumfries, but in hours of business he was quite himself, and capable of discharging the duties of his office; nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon, as the statement, that he was perpetually under its stimulus, unequivocally implies.

To attempt the refutation of the various other calumnies with which his memory has been assailed, some of which are so absurd as hardly to merit any attention, does not fall in my way, though I hope they will be suitably taken notice of; but permit me to add, that I have seen Burns in all his various phases—in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family; indeed I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an Excise-officer; and I never beheld anything like the gross enormities with which he is now charged. That when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than attentive and affectionate to a high degree. Upon the whole, it is much to be lamented that there has been so much broad unqualified assertion as has been displayed in Burns's history; the virulence indeed with which his memory has been treated, is hardly to be paralleled in the annals of literature. Wishing every success to the laudable attempt of rescuing it from the indiscriminate abuse which has been heaped upon it,—I remain, &c.,

A. FINDLATER.

TO MR ALEX. PETERKIN, EDINBURGH.

LETTER FROM MR JAMES GRAY* TO GILBERT BURNS,

CONTAINING OBSERVATIONS ON THE LAST THREE YEARS OF THE POET'S LIFE.

It was my good fortune to be introduced to the poet soon after I went to Dumfries. This was early in 1794, and I saw him often and intimately during the remainder of his life. I have often been with him in his scenes of merriment, passing with him the social hour. I have been delighted by the constant flashes of a brilliant

* Mr Gray was master of the High School of Dumfries in Burns's day. He latterly became a chaplain in the Hon. East India Company's service, and died at Cutch in 1830.

wit, playful or caustic, as the occasion required; but never disgusted by anything coarse, vicious, or vulgar. I have not unfrequently enjoyed with him the morning walk—seen him clear and unclouded I was astonished by the extent and promptitude of his information—by his keen inspection into human character—by the natural, warm, and energetic flow of his eloquence—and by the daring flights of his imagination. I have often seen him portray with a pencil dipped in the colours of the rainbow, everything fair, great, or sublime, in human character or nature at large; and along with those, I ever heard him the zealous advocate of humanity, religion, virtue, and freedom. On these occasions I have heard him quote the English poets, from Shakespeare down to Cowper; while their finest passages seemed to acquire new beauty from his energetic recitation. His countenance, on these occasions, would brighten, and his large dark eyes would sparkle with delight. At other times he would roll them over the purple tints of the morning sky, or the varied beauties of a fine landscape; while he would burst out into glowing descriptions, or enthusiastic strains of adoration, worthy of the royal Hebrew bard

He seemed to me to frequent convivial parties from the same feelings with which he wrote poetry, because nature had eminently qualified him to shine there, and he never on any occasion indulged in solitary drinking. He was always the living spirit of the company, and, by the communications of his genius, seemed to animate every one present with a portion of his own fire. He indulged in the sally of wit and humour, of striking originality, and sometimes of bitter sarcasm, but always free from the least taint of grossness. I was, from the commencement of my acquaintance with him, struck with his aversion to all kinds of indelicacy, and have seen him dazzle and delight a party for hours together by the brilliancy and rapidity of his flashes, without even an allusion that could give offence to vestal purity.

I often met him at breakfast parties, which were then customary at Dumfries; and on these occasions, if he had been suffering from midnight excesses, it must have been apparent. But his whole air was that of one who had enjoyed refreshing slumbers, and who arose happy in himself, and to diffuse happiness on all around him; his complexion was fresh and clear, his eye brilliant, his whole frame vigorous and elastic, and his imagination ever on the wing. His morning conversations were marked by an impassioned eloquence that seemed to flow from immediate inspiration, and shed an atmosphere of light and beauty around everything it touched, alternately melting and elevating the souls of all who heard him. In our solitary walks on a summer morning, the simplest floweret by the wayside, every sight of rural simplicity and happiness, every creature that seemed to drink the joy of the seasons, awakened the sympathy of his heart, which flowed in spontaneous music from his lips; and every new opening of the beauty or the magnificence of the scene before him called forth the poetry of his soul.

As a friend, no views of selfishness ever made him faithless to

those whom he had once honoured with that name—ever ready to aid them by the wisdom of his counsels, when his means were inadequate to their relief; and, by a delicate sympathy, to soothe the sufferings and the sorrows he could not heal. As a citizen he never neglected a single professional duty; and even on the slender income of an Excise officer, he never contracted a single debt he could not pay. He could submit to privations, but could not brook the dependence of owing anything to any man on earth. To the poor he was liberal beyond his limited means, and the cry of the unfortunate was never addressed to him in vain; and when he could not himself relieve their necessities, he was often known, by a pathetic recital of their misfortunes, to draw the tear and open the purse of those who were not famed either for tenderness of heart or charity; on such occasions it was impossible to resist his solicitations.

He was a kind and an attentive father, and took great delight in spending his evenings in the cultivation of the minds of his children. Their education was the grand object of his life, and he did not, like most parents, think it sufficient to send them to public schools; he was their private instructor; and even at that early age, bestowed great pains in training their minds to habits of thought and reflection, and in keeping them pure from every form of vice. This he considered a sacred duty, and never, to his last illness, relaxed in his diligence.

With his eldest son, a boy of not more than nine years of age, he had read many of the favourite poets, and some of the best historians, of our language; and, what is more remarkable, gave him considerable aid in the study of Latin. This boy attended the grammar school of Dumfries, and soon attracted my notice by the strength of his talent, and the ardour of his ambition. Before he had been a year at school, I thought it right to advance him a form; and he began to read Cæsar, and gave me translations of that author of such beauty as, I confessed, surprised me. On inquiry, I found that his father made him turn over his dictionary till he was able to translate to him the passage in such a way that he could gather the author's meaning, and that it was to him he owed that polished and forcible English with which I was so greatly struck. I have mentioned this incident merely to show what minute attention he paid to this important branch of parental duty.

Many insinuations have been made against his character as a husband; but I am happy to say that I have in exculpation the direct evidence of Mrs Burns herself, who, among many amiable and respectable qualities, ranks a veneration for the memory of her departed husband, whom she never names but in terms of the profoundest respect and the deepest regret, to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his kindnesses to herself, not as the momentary overflowings of the heart, in a season of penitence for offences generously forgiven, but an habitual tenderness that ended only with his life.

I place this evidence, which I am proud to bring forward on her own authority, against a thousand anonymous calumnies.

To the very end of his existence, all the powers of his mind were as vigorous as in the blossom of their spring; and it may be asked, if the numerous songs written for Mr Thomson's collection, which were his last compositions, and by many considered the glory of his genius, indicate any intellectual decay? I saw him four days before he died, and though the hand of death was obviously upon him, he repeated to me a little poem he had composed the day before, full of energy and tenderness.

Your brother partook, in an eminent degree, of the virtues and the vices of the poetical temperament. He was often hurried into error by the impetuosity of his passions, but he was never their slave; he was often led astray by the meteor lights of pleasure, but he never lost sight of the right way, to which he was ever eager to return; and, amid all his wanderings and his self-conflicts, his heart was pure and his principles untainted. Though he was often wellnigh broken-hearted by the severity of his fate, yet he was never heard to complain; and, had he been an unconnected individual, he would have bid defiance to fortune; but his sorrows for his wife and children, for whom he suffered much, and feared more, were keen and acute: yet unmingled with selfishness. All his life he had to maintain a hard struggle with cares; and he often had to labour under those depressions to which genius is subject: yet his spirit never stooped from its lofty career, and, to the very end of his warfare with himself and with fortune, he continued strong in its independence. The love of posthumous fame was the master passion of his soul, which kept all others in subordination, and prevented them from running into that disorder which his great susceptibility to all those objects which pleased his fancy or interested his heart, and the vivacity of all his emotions might, without this regulating principle, have produced. Amidst the darkest overshadowings of his fate, or the most alluring temptations of pleasure, it was his consoling and leading star; and, as it directed his eye to distant ages, it was often his only support in the one, and the most powerful check against the dangerous indulgence of the other. Possessing an eloquence that might have guided the councils of nations, and which would have been eagerly courted by any party, he would have perished by famine rather than submit to the degradation of becoming the tool of faction. It is a known fact that he rejected a sum equal to his whole annual income, for the support of those measures which he thought most for the interests of the country. He had a loftiness of sentiment that raised him above making his genius a hireling even in a good cause, and his laurels were never stained by a single act of venality.

Though his chosen companions were not more remarkable for talent than for the respectability of their character, and the purity of their lives, and many ladies, of the most delicate and cultivated

minds and elegant manners, were numbered among his friends, who clung to him through good and through bad report, and still cherish an affectionate and enthusiastic regard for his memory, yet has he been accused of being addicted to low company. Qualified for the noblest employments, he was condemned to drudge in the lowest occupations—often in scenes where to avoid contamination was an effort of virtue. Accumulated misfortunes, and the cruelty of mankind, actually broke his heart, and hurried him to a premature grave, which to him has been no sanctuary, for the voice of calumny has been heard even there; but prejudices will pass away, and posterity will do him justice. I shall deem it the proudest work of my life, if my feeble efforts shall be in the slightest degree instrumental in correcting erroneous opinions, which have been too long and too widely circulated.

LETTER FROM MR GEORGE THOMSON.

The following letter was sent to Messrs Blackie, and first appeared in their very valuable edition of the poet's works.

. . . . Much has it vexed me that Mr [Allan] Cunningham in his immensity of notes has given circulation to so many *on dits*, surmises, and innuendos about the irregularities and dissipation of the poet; hearsay tales, resting upon very doubtful authority; some of them perhaps true, and others exaggerated or unfounded. I am far from thinking that he was not guilty of many follies, remembering his own memorable and candid confession of these, which methinks might have served to prevent biographers from prying into holes and corners in search of gossiping details to prove the truth of what *he had himself admitted!* Mark his contrition and humility:—

> "The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow,
> *And softer flame;*
> But thoughtless follies laid him low,
> And stain'd his name."

But if we are forced to go into evidence, I would say that I think the detailed allegations of the Herons and Cunninghams are neutralised by the statements of the Grays, Findlaters, and Lockharts. Gilbert Burns told me that his brother's frailties and errors had been considerable, *although by no means so great as they were called.* In this Mr Lockhart, after due inquiry and consideration, decidedly concurs with him. Mr Lockhart in his biography says—"that Burns ever sunk into a toper—that he ever was addicted to solitary drinking—that his bottle ever interfered with his discharge of his duties as an exciseman—or that, in spite of some transitory follies, he ever ceased to be a most affectionate husband—all these charges have been insinuated, *and they are all false.* His intemperance was, as Heron says, in fits: his aberrations of all kinds were occasional

not systematic: they were all to himself the sources of exquisite misery in the retrospect: they were the aberrations of a man whose moral sense was never deadened—of one who encountered more temptation from without and from within, than the immense majority of mankind, far from having to contend against, or even able to imagine.'

Here I take my stand in vindication of Burns, and I contend that Mr James Gray, and Collector Findlater, his superior in office, both resident in Dumfries, who saw him daily and knew him thoroughly, and Mr Lockhart, who was at pains to investigate the charges against him, are fully as well entitled to belief in his behalf as Mr Heron, Mr Cunningham, and the gossips of Dumfries are, in their assertions, insinuations, and assumptions to his prejudice.

It is well known that the poet was often literally dragged into society on account of his wit and humour and the charms of his conversation, and that strangers from distant parts frequently journeyed to Dumfries on purpose to see the greatest poet of the age. Could he be insensible to the homage of those visitors; and can we wonder at his accepting their flattering invitations to dinner, or that his flashes of wit should have prolonged the hours of social enjoyment beyond prudential limits on such occasions? Poor Burns! how cruel was his fate, doomed through life to wither at the foot of fortune's ladder, with a genius that could have carried him triumphantly to its summit, if the hand of power had been stretched out to help him to ascend. One of our witty philosophers has expressed an opinion, I am *told*, for I have not yet seen it, that as the public has been highly gratified by the poet's works, it is of little consequence how the poet fared! If this be what he has said, I venture to differ from him, and to think that if the case were his *own* he would quite agree with me, and would scout such preposterous doctrine. Had Burns been promoted to the office of Collector in the Excise, or placed in any situation that would have afforded him a moderate competence, and left him leisure to cultivate the Muse, instead of being left to pine in poverty and to waste his life in the drudgery of a common gauger, the public, in all probability, would have been gratified by many more invaluable productions from his pen. That a man of such original genius, of such transcendent talents, and of such independence of mind as he possessed, did not find a patron in the influential class of society, to rescue him from the situation of a drudge, is a matter over to be lamented. *Considering his misfortunes*, it might have been expected, when the grave closed over him, that he would have been treated with far greater sympathy by biographers and reviewers, who surely have scrutinised his conduct by too severe a test. . . . .

G. THOMSON.

POEMS.

TRAGIC FRAGMENT.

The following lines are thus introduced by Burns in one of his manuscripts printed in "Cromek's Reliques:"—"In my early years nothing less would serve me than courting the tragic muse. I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy, forsooth; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for sometime threatened us, prevented my further progress. In those days I never wrote down anything; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory. The above, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from a great character—great in occasional instances of generosity, and daring at times in villanies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself, as in the words of the fragment"—

All devil as I am, a damnèd wretch,
A harden'd, stubborn, unrepenting villain,
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
And with sincere, though unavailing, sighs,
I view the helpless children of distress.
With tears indignant I behold the oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.
Even you, ye helpless crew, I pity you;
Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity;
Ye poor, despised, abandon'd vagabonds,
Whom vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.
—Oh, but for kind, though ill-requited, friends,
I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you!
O injured God! Thy goodness has endow'd me
With talents passing most of my compeers,
Which I in just proportion have abused
As far surpassing other common villains,
As Thou in natural parts hadst given me more

THE TORBOLTON LASSES.

The two following poems, written at different times, give a list of the eligible damsels in the poet's neighbourhood. According to Mr Chambers, Gilbert Burns had made advances to one of the daughters at "the Bennals," which were declined. The poet takes occasion to hint that he himself, though not unsusceptible, was too proud to risk a rebuff.

If ye gae up to yon hill-tap,
Ye'll there see bonny Peggy;
She kens her faither is a laird,
And she forsooth's a leddy.

There Sophy tight, a lassie bright,
Besides a handsome fortune:
Wha canna win her in a night,
Has little art in courting.

Gae down by Faile, and taste the ale,
And tak a look o' Mysie;
She's dour[1] and din, a deil within,
But aiblins[2] she may please ye.

If she be shy, her sister try,
Ye'll maybe fancy Jenny,
If ye'll dispense wi' want o' sense—
She kens hersel she's bonny.

As ye gae up by yon hillside,
Speer[3] in for bonny Bessy;
She'll gie ye a beck,[4] and bid ye licht,
And handsomely address ye.

There's few sae bonnie, nane sae guid,
In a' King George' dominion;
If ye should doubt the truth o' this—
It's Bessy's ain opinion.

In Torbolton, ye ken, there are proper young men
And proper young lasses and a', man;
But ken ye the Ronalds that live in the Bennals,
They carry the gree[5] frae them a', man.

Their father's a laird, and weel he can spare't,
Braid money to tocher[6] them a', man,
To proper young men, he'll clink in the hand
Gowd guineas a hunder or twa, man.

There's ane they ca' Jean, I'll warrant ye've seen
As bonny a lass or as braw, man;
But for sense and guid taste she'll vie wi' the best,
And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

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1 Obstinate. 2 Perhaps. 3 Ask or call.
4 Bow. 5 Palm. 6 Portion.

The charms o' the min', the langer they shine,
The mair admiration they draw, man;
While peaches and cherries, and roses and lilies,
They fade and they wither awa, man.

If ye be for Miss Jean, tak this frae a frien',
A hint o' a rival or twa, man,
The Laird o' Blackbyre wad gang through the fire,
If that wad entice her awa, man.

The Laird o' Braehead has been on his speed,
For mair than a towmond[1] or twa, man;
The Laird o' the Ford will straught on a board,[2]
If he canna get her at a', man.

Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,
The boast of our bachelors a', man;
Sae sonsy[3] and sweet, sae fully complete,
She steals our affections awa, man.

If I should detail the pick and the wale[4]
O' lasses that live here awa, man,
The fault wad be mine, if they didna shine,
The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

I lo'e her mysel, but darena weel tell,
My poverty keeps me in awe, man,
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
Does little or naething at a', man.

Yet I wadna choose to let her refuse,
Nor hae't in her power to say na, man;
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
My stomach's as proud as them a', man.

Though I canna ride in weel-tooted pride,
And flee o'er the hills like a craw, man,
I can haud up my head with the best o' the breed,
Though fluttering ever so braw, man

My coat and my vest, they are Scotch o' the best,
O' pairs o' guid breeks I hae twa, man,
And stockings and pumps to put on my stumps,
And ne'er a wrang steek in them a' man.

My sarks[5] they are few, but five o' them new,
Twal' hundred,[6] as white as the snaw, man,
A ten-shilling hat, a Holland cravat;
There are no mony poets sae braw, man.

I never had frien's weel stockit in means,
To leave me a hundred or twa, man;
Nae weel-tocher'd aunts, to wait on their drants,[7]
And wish them in hell for it a', man.

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1 Twelvemonth.
2 Die and be stretched on a board.
3 Comely.
4 Choice.
5 Shirts.
6 A kind of cloth.
7 Humours.

I never was cannie[1] for hoarding o' money,
Or claughtin't[2] together at a', man,
I've little to spend, and naething to lend,
But deevil a shilling I awe,[3] man.

. . . . . .

WINTER:

A DIRGE.

'Winter: a Dirge," was copied into Burns's Commonplace Book in April 1784, and prefaced with the following reflections:—"As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment which are in a manner peculiar to myself, or some here and there such out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of Winter more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the

'Mighty tempest, and the heavy waste,
Abrupt, and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,'

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity favourable to everything great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me—something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.' In one of these seasons just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:"—

THE wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast," *
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,

---

[1] Careful. [2] Gathering greedily. [3] Owe

* Dr Young.

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw:
Or the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw.

—*Winter*, *page* 4.

Here, firm, I rest, they must be best,
Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want (oh, do Thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
Assist me to resign.

A PRAYER,

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

In the Commonplace Book already alluded to the following melancholy note accompanies this Poem:—"There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broken by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy. In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed this Prayer:"—

O THOU great Being! what Thou art
Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey Thy high behest.
Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
Oh, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine!

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

(An Unco Mournfu' Tale)

Mr Lockhart has well said that the expiring animal's admonitions touching the education of the "poor toop lamb," her son and heir, and the "yowie, silly thing," her daughter are from the same peculiar vein of sly homely wit, embedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the "Twa Dogs," and perhaps to its utmost depth in his "Death and Doctor Hornbook." It need scarcely be added that poor Mailie was a real personage, though she did not actually die until some time after her *last words* were written.

"The circumstances of the poor sheep," says Gilbert Burns, "were pretty much as Robert has described them. He had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe

and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlea. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious-looking, awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with Hughoc's appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her 'Death and Dying Words,' pretty much in the way they now stand."

As Mailie and her lambs thegither
Was ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
And owre she warsled[1] in the ditch:
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc he cam doytin'[2] by.
Wi' glowring een, and lifted han's,
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, waes my heart! he couldna mend it!
He gapèd wide, but naething spak —
At length poor Mailie silence brak:—
"O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my woefu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
And bear them to my master dear.
"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
Oh, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
And let them wander at their will;
So may his flock increase, and grow
To scores o' lambs, and packs o' woo'!
"Tell him he was a master kin',
And aye was guid to me and mine;
And now my dying charge I gie him—
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.
"Oh, bid him save their harmless lives
Frae[3] dogs, and tods, and butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow-milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel:
And tent them duly, e'en and morn,
Wi' teats o' hay, and ripps o' corn.
"And may they never learn the gaets[4]
Of ither vile, wanrestfu'[5] pets!
To slink through slaps, and reave and steal
At stacks o' peas or stocks o' kail,
So may they, like their great forbears,
For mony a year come through the shears:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
And bairns greet[6] for them when they're dead.

[1] Struggled. [2] Walking stupidly. [3] From.
[4] Habits [5] Restless. [6] Weep.

"My poor toop-lamb, my son and heir,
Oh, bid him breed him up wi' care!
And if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins[1] in his breast!
And warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame:
And no to rin and wear his clouts,*
Like ither menseless,[2] graceless brutes.
"And neist my yowie, silly thing,
Guid keep thee frae a tether string!
Oh, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit,† moorland toop,
But aye keep mind to moop and mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!
"And now, my bairns, wi' my last breath
I lea'e my blessin' wi' you baith:
And when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.
"Now, honest Hughoc, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;
And bid him burn this cursèd tether,
And, for thy pains, thou's get my blether."[3]
This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
And closed her een amang the dead.

THE ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane of his woes;
Poor Mailie 's dead!

It 's no the loss o' ware's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He 's lost a friend and neibor dear
In Mailie dead.

Through a' the toun‡ she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;

---

[1] Good sense. [2] Senseless. [3] Bladder.

* Clouts, clothes or rags, with reference to a piece of clothing with which rams are cumbered at certain seasons, for a purpose which will hardly bear full explanation. Mr Smith, in his recent edition of the poet's works, misled by the usual spelling of the word *cloots*, which means hoofs or feet, and being apparently ignorant of this custom, robs the allusion of all its broad humour.

† A contemptuous term. ‡ Round the farm.

Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him
Than Mailie dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
And could behave hersel wi' mense:[1]
I'll say't, she never brak a fence
Through thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence *
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,[2]
Her living image in her yowe
Comes bleating to him, owre the knowe,[3]
For bits o' bread;
And down the briny pearls rowe
For Mailie dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket,[4] and hairy hips;
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the Tweed:
A bonnier fleesh ne'er cross'd the clips
Than Mailie dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie[5] thing—a rape!
It maks guid fellows girn an' gape, †
Wi' chokin' dread;
And Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape,
For Mailie dead.

Oh, a' ye bards on bonny Doon!
And wha on Ayr your chanters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon
His Mailie dead.

OH WHY THE DEUCE SHOULD I REPINE.

The following is said to have been written extempore:—

Oh why the deuce should I repine,
And be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine—
I'll go and be a sodger.

---

[1] Decorum. [2] Dell. [3] Knoll.
[4] Matted fleece. [5] Unlucky.

* Shuts himself up in the parlour with his sorrow.
† Grin and gasp—an allusion to hanging.

I gat some gear wi' meikle care,
I held it weel thegither;
But now it 's gane, and something mair—
I 'll go and be a sodger.

THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE.

The "Six Belles" were—Miss Helen Miller, who married Burns's friend, Dr Mackenzie; Miss Markland, who married another of the poet's friends, Mr Finlay, an Excise officer; Miss Jean Smith, who married yet another friend, Mr Candlish, and was the mother of the celebrated Dr Candlish of Edinburgh; Miss Betty (Miller), sister of Miss Helen Miller, became Mrs Templeton; Miss Morton married Mr Paterson, a Mauchline merchant; and Jean Armour became Mrs Robert Burns, and who does not know her history?

In Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
The pride o' the place and its neighbourhood a';
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
In Lon'on or Paris they'd gotten it a'.

Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw;
There 's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,
But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'.

A PRAYER

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

"This 'Prayer' and the 'Stanzas,' which follow," the poet wrote in his Commonplace Book, "were composed when labouring fits, and other alarming symptoms of pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threatens me, first put nature on the alarm. The stanzas are misgivings in the hour of despondency and prospect of death. The grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that Being to whom we owe life with every enjoyment that renders life delightful."

O Thou unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast form'd me
With passions wild and strong;
And listening to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-good! for such Thou art.
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Why am I loath to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms.
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms:
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way:
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran

O Thou great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea:
With that controlling power assist even me,
Those headlong furious passions to confine,
For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
To rule their torrent in the allow'd line:
Oh, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

THE FIRST PSALM.

The man, in life wherever placed,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore.

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees,
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore
Hath given them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH PSALM

O Thou, the first, the greatest friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling-place!

Before the mountains heaved their heads
Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself,
Arose at Thy command;

That Power which raised and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before Thy sight
Than yesterday that 's past.

Thou givest the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought;
Again Thou say'st, "Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou takest them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flower,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX.

This fragment was found by Cromek among the poet's manuscripts. Ruisseaux —a translation of his own name—is French for rivulets.

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care,
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fasht him,
Except the moment that they crusht him:
For sune as chance or fate had husht 'em,
Though e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lasht 'em,
And thought it sport.

Though he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him he was learn'd and clark,
Ye roosed him than!

MAUCHLINE BELLES.

Oh leave novels, ye Mauchline belles!
Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks
For rakish rooks like Rob Mossgiel.*

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
They make your youthful fancies reel;
They heat your veins, and fire your brains.
And then ye're prey for Rob Mossgiel.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung,
A heart that warmly seems to feel;
That feeling heart but acts a part—
'Tis rakish art in Rob Mossgiel.

* Rob Mossgiel—Robert Burns of Mossgiel.

The frank address, the soft caress,
Are worse than poison'd hearts of steel;
The frank address and *politesse*
Are all finesse in Rob Mossgiel.

DEATH AND DR HORNBOOK.

A TRUE STORY.

"Death and Dr Hornbook," says Gilbert Burns, "though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. The schoolmaster of Torbolton parish, to eke out the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised that advice would be given, in common disorders, at the shop gratis. Robert was at a mason-meeting in Torbolton, when the dominie made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions mentioned in his letter to Dr Moore crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of his way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me the next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me."

Cromek says of the hero of this poem:—"At Glasgow I heard that the hero of this exquisite satire was living: Hamilton managed to introduce me to him—we talked of almost all subjects save the poems of Burns. Dr Hornbook is above the middle size, stout made, and inclining to corpulency. His complexion is swarthy, his eye black and expressive: he wears a brown wig, and dresses in black. There is little or nothing of the pedant about him: I think a man who had never read the poem would scarcely discover any. Burns, I am told, had no personal enmity to Wilson."

The mirth and amusement occasioned by the publication of the poem drove the schoolmaster out of the district, and he became session-clerk of the Gorbals parish, Glasgow, and died there in 1839.

Some books are lies fra end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
E'en ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid[1] at times to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun[2] to tell,
Which lately on a night befell,
Is just as true 's the deil's in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel
'S a muckle pity.

The clachan yill[3] had made me canty,
I wasna fou, but just had plenty;

[1] Lie. [2] Going. [3] Village ale

I stacher'd[1] whyles,[2] but yet took tent aye
To free the ditches;
And hillocks, stanes, and bushes kenn'd aye
Frae ghaists and witches.

The rising moon began to glower[3]
The distant Cumnock hills out-owre:
To count her horns, wi' a' my power,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I couldna tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And toddlin'[4] down on Willie's mill,*
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker:[5]
Though leeward whiles, against my will,
I took a bicker.[6]

I there wi' something did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither;[7]
An awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-taed leister[8] on the ither
Lay large and lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame[9] it had ava;
And then its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp and sma',
As cheeks o' branks. †

"Guid-e'en," quo' I; "friend, hae ye been mawin',
When ither folk are busy sawin'?"‡
It seem'd to mak a kind o' stan',
But naething spak;
At length, says I, "Friend, whare ye gaun?
Will ye go back?"

It spak right howe,[10]—"My name is Death;
But be na fley'd."[11]—Quoth I, "Guid faith,
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie;
I red[12] ye weel, tak care o' skaith,[13]
See, there's a gully!"[14]

---

[1] Staggered. [2] Sometimes. [3] Stare.
[4] Tottering. [5] Steady. [6] Short race
[7] An uncertain fear. [8] A fish-spear.
[9] Belly. [10] Hollow. [11] Frightened.
[12] Warn. [13] Harm. [14] Clasp-knife

* Torbolton Mill, then occupied by William Muir, an intimate friend of the Burns family—hence called *Willie's mill*.

† A kind of bridle.

‡ This rencounter happened in seed-time of 1785.—*B*

"Guidman," quo' he, "put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle[1]
To be mislear'd,[2]
I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard."

"Weel, weel!" says I, "a bargain be't;
Come, gies your hand, and sae we're gree't;
We'll ease our shanks[3] and tak a seat—
Come, gies your news;
This while* ye hae been mony a gate,[4]
At mony a house."

"Ay, ay!" quo' he, and shook his head,
"It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread
And choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
And sae maun Death.

"Sax thousand years are near hand fled
Sin' I was to the butchering bred,
And mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scar me;
Till ane Hornbook's ta'en up the trade,
And faith he'll waur me.

"Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the clachan,
Deil mak his king's-hood[5] in a spleuchan![6]
He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan†
And ither chaps,
The weans[7] haud out their fingers laughin',
And pouk my hips.[8]

"See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierced mony a gallant heart;
But Doctor Hornbook, wi' his art
And cursèd skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
Damn'd haet they'll kill.

"'Twas but yestreen, nae further gaen,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
But deil ma care,
It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

---

1 Might be tempted. 2 Mischievous. 3 Limbs.
4 Road. 5 The great gut. 6 Tobacco-pouch.
7 Children. 8 Pluck at his hams—show their contempt for him

* An epidemic fever was then raging in that country.—*B.*
† Buchan's Domestic Medicine.—*B*

"Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortified the part,
That when I lookèd to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierced the heart
O' a kail-runt.[1]

"I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
I near-hand cowpit[2] wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld apothecary
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae tried a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

"Even them he canna get attended,
Although their face he ne'er had kenn'd it,
Just sh—e in a kail-blade and send it,
As soon 's he smells 't,
Baith their disease and what will mend it
At ance he tells 't.

"And then a' doctor's saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, and metals,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, and bottles
He 's sure to hae:
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

"Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True salmarinum o' the seas;
The farina of beans and peas,
He has 't in plenty;
Aquafontis, what you please,
He can content ye

"Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus spiritus of capons;
Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
Distill'd *per se;*
Salalkali o' midge-tail clippings,
And mony mae."

"Waes me for Johnnie Ged's * hole noo',"
Quo' I, "if that thae news be true!
His braw calf-ward † whare gowans[3] grew,
Sae white and bonny,
Nae doubt they 'll rive it wi' the plew;
They 'll ruin Johnnie!"

The creature grain'd an eldritch[4] laugh,
And says, "Ye needna yoke the pleugh,

[1] Cabbage (Colewort) stalk. [2] Tumbled over. [3] Daisies. [4] Unearthly.

* The grave-digger.
† The church-yard had been sometimes used as an enclosure for calves.

Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear:
They 'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh[1]
In twa-three year.

"Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I 'm free to tak my aith,
That Hornbook's skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap and pill.

"An honest wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel-bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

"A country laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
And pays him well;
The lad, for twa guid gimmer-pets,[2]
Was laird himsel.

"A bonny lass, ye kenn'd her name,
Some ill-brewn drink had hoved her wame:
She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
In Hornbook's care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

"That 's just a swatch o' Hornbook's way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, and slay,
An 's weel paid for 't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his damn'd dirt:

"But, hark! I 'll tell you of a plot,
Though dinna ye be speaking o 't;
I 'll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead 's a herrin';
Neist time we meet, I 'll wad a groat,
He 's got his fairin'!"[3]

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour ayont the twal,
Which raised us baith:
I took the way that pleased mysel,
And sae did Death.

[1] Furrow. [2] Young ewes. [3] Deserts.

THE TWA HERDS; OR, THE HOLY TULZIE.

From an MS. in the British Museum we quote the poet's own account of the origin of this poem.—"The following was the first of my Poetical productions that saw the light. I gave a copy of it to a particular friend of mine who was very fond of these things, and told him 'I did not know who was the Author, but that I had got a copy of it by accident.' The occasion was a bitter and shameless quarrel between the two Rev. gentlemen, Mr Moodie of Riccarton and Mr Russel of Kilmarnock. It was at the time when the hue and cry against Patronage was at the worst." The reverend gentlemen mentioned by the poet had quarrelled, it appears, over some petty question of parish boundaries; and in the presbytery, where the matter had been brought up for settlement, they fell foul of each other after the manner of the wicked and ungodly. It is only justice to the memory of the poet to mention, that he did not include this poem in any of the editions of his works which were published during his lifetime.

"Blockheads with reason wicked wits abhor;
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war."—POPE.

O, a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,[1]
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks,[2]
About the dikes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er gae gospel horn a blast,
These five and twenty simmers past,
Oh! dool to tell,
Hae had a bitter black outcast[3]
Atween themsel.

O Moodie, man, and wordy Russell,
How could you raise so vile a bustle,
Ye'll see how New-Light herds will whistle
And think it fine:
The Lord's cause ne'er gat sic a twistle
Sin' I hae min'.

O sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit,
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank?
Nae poison'd sour Arminian stank
He let them taste.
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear, they drank,—
Oh, sic a feast!

---

[1] Dogs [2] Stray sheep and old ewes. [3] Quarrel.

The thummart,[1] wil'-cat, brock,[2] and tod,[3]
Weel kenn'd his voice through a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he liked to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard through muir and dale,
He kenn'd the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly swing the gospel-club,
And New-Light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them owre the burning dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—oh! do I live to see't,
Sic famous twa should disagreet,
And names like "villain," "hypocrite,"
Ilk ither gi'en,
While New-Light herds, wi' laughin' spite,
Say neither 's liein'![4]

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
There 's Duncan,* deep, and Peebles,† shaul,[5]
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,‡
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, het and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, sirs, how we're beset,
There 's scarce a new herd that we get
But comes frae 'mang that cursèd set
I winna name;
I hope frae heaven to see them yet
In fiery flame.

Dalrymple § has been lang our fae,
M'Gill‖ has wrought us meikle wae,

---

1 Pole-cat. 2 Badger. 3 Fox.
4 Lying. 5 Shallow.

* Dr Robert Duncan, minister of Dundonald.
† Rev. William Peebles, of Newton-upon-Ayr.
‡ Rev. William Auld, minister of Mauchline.
§ Rev. Dr Dalrymple, one of the ministers of Ayr.
‖ Rev. William M'Gill, one of the ministers of Ayr.

And that cursed rascal ca'd M'Quhae,*
And baith the Shaws,†
That aft hae made us black and blae,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow‡ lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought aye death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chiel wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forbye turn-coats amang oursel;
There's Smith for ane,
I doubt he's but a gray-nick quill,
And that ye'll fin'.

Oh! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come, join your counsel and your skills,
To cowe the lairds,
And get the brutes the powers themsels
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And Learning in a woody[1] dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and D'rymple's eloquence,
M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
And guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, wha through the heart can glance,
May a' pack aff.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

The origin of this terrible satire may be briefly told as follows:—Gavin Hamilton, the special friend of the poet, had been denied the benefit of the ordinances of the church, because he was alleged to have made a journey on the Sabbath, and to have made one of his servants take in some potatoes from the garden

[1] Halter.

* Minister of St Quivox.
† Dr Andrew Shaw of Craigie, and Dr David Shaw of Coylton.
‡ Dr Peter Wodrow, Torbolton

on another Sunday—hence the allusion to his "kail and potatoes" in the poem. William Fisher, one of Mr Auld's elders, made himself somewhat conspicuous in the case. He was a great pretender to sanctity, and a punctilious stickler for outward observances. Poor man, he unfortunately merited the satire of the poet, as he was a drunkard, and latterly made too free with the church-money in his hands. Returning drunk from Mauchline one night, he fell into a ditch and died from exposure.

The partially literal exposition of the doctrine of election in the first verse makes the flesh creep.

O THOU, wha in the heavens dost dwell
Wha, as it pleases best thysel,
Sends ane to heaven, and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They 've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou hast left in night,
That I am here, afore thy sight,
For gifts and grace,
A burnin' and a shinin' light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get sic exaltation?
I, wha deserve sic just damnation
For broken laws,
Five thousand years 'fore my creation,
Through Adam's cause!

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me into hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Whare damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great and ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example,
To a' thy flock.

O Lord, thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singing there, and dancing here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free frae them a'.

But yet, O Lord! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd[1] wi' fleshly lust;

[1] Troubled.

And sometimes, too, wi' warldly trust,
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defiled in sin.

O Lord! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg—
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
Oh, may it ne'er be a livin' plague,
To my dishonour,
And I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun avow,
Wi' Lizzie's lass, three times I trow—
But, Lord, that Friday I was fou'
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy servant true
Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

Maybe thou lets this fleshly thorn
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud should turn,
'Cause he 's sae gifted;
If sae, thy han' maun e'en be borne
Until thou lift it.

Lord, bless thy chosen in this place,
For here thou hast a chosen race:
But God confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace
And public shame.

Lord, mind Gawn Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cartes,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts,
Wi' grit and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

And whan we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,[1]
As set the world in a roar
O' laughin' at us;—
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail and potatoes.

Lord, hear my earnest cry and prayer
Against the presbyt'ry of Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak it bare
Upo' their heads,
Lord, weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

[1] Disturbance.

O Lord, my God, that glib-tongued Aiken,*
My very heart and saul are quakin',
To think how we stood groanin', shakin',
And swat wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin' lip and snakin',[1]
Held up his head.

Lord, in the day of vengeance try him,
Lord, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their prayer;
But for thy people's sake destroy 'em,
And dinna spare.

But, Lord, remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by nane,
And a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

Here Holy Willie's sair worn clay
Taks up its last abode;
His saul has ta'en some other way,
I fear the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure 's a gun,
Poor silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he 's as black 's the grun,
Observe wha 's standing wi' him!

Your brunstane devilship, I see,
Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat a wee,[2]
Till ance ye 've heard my story.

Your pity I will not implore,
For pity ye hae nane!
Justice, alas! has gien him o'er,
And mercy's day is gane.

But hear me, sir, deil as ye are,
Look something to your credit;
A coof[3] like him wad stain your name,
If it were kent ye did it.

---

[1] Sneering [2] Little. [3] Fool

* William Aiken, a lawyer, a friend of the poet's.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING UP HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER 1785.

"The verses to the 'Mouse' and 'Mountain Daisy,'" Gilbert Burns says, "were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough: I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise."

"John Blane," says Mr Chambers, "who was farm-servant at Mossgiel at the time of its composition, still (1838) lives at Kilmarnock. He stated to me that he recollected the incident perfectly. Burns was holding the plough, with Blane for his driver, when the little creature was observed running off across the field. Blane, having the *pettle*, or plough-cleaning utensil, in his hand at the moment, was thoughtlessly running after it, to kill it, when Burns checked him, but not angrily, asking what ill the poor mouse had ever done him. The poet then seemed to his driver to grow very thoughtful, and, during the remainder of the afternoon, he spoke not. In the night time he awoke Blane, who slept with him, and, reading the poem which had in the meantime been composed, asked what he thought of the *mouse* now."

Wee, sleekit, cowrin', tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic 's in thy breastie!
Thou needna start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle![1]
I wad be laith to rin and chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle![2]

I 'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken nature's social union,
And justifies that ill opinion
Which maks thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
And fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles,[3] but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave *
'S a sma' request:
I 'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,[4]
And never miss 't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
And naething now to big[5] a new ane
O' foggage green!
And bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell[6] and keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
And weary winter comin' fast,

[1] Hurrying run. [2] Pattle or pettle, the plough spade. [3] Sometimes.
[4] Remainder. [5] Build. [6] Sharp.

* An ear of corn in a thrave—that is, twenty-four sheaves.

And cozie [1] here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out for a' thy trouble,
But [2] house or hauld,[3]
To thole [4] the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch [5] cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my ee
On prospects drear!
And forward, though I canna see,
I guess and fear.

HALLOWEEN.

The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.—*B.*

Fortunately Burns has left us little to say in explanation of his "Halloween:" his own notes supply the key to unlock all its forgotten mysteries. While each district had its peculiar rites and superstitions, the poem may be taken as an accurate picture of a Scottish Halloween during the last century. The present writer has witnessed many of the observances here chronicled, and one unchronicled, not less terrible than any here given. On Halloween he that went three times round the town (farm buildings) astride a broom would be favoured with a sight of the devil. So strong was the dread, and as there was no personal inducement in the venture, the writer never heard of any one making the attempt. A couplet is still current in the country districts with servants who are wearied of their service:—

"This is Halloween,
The morn 's hallowday;

---

[1] Comfortable. [2] Without. [3] Holding.
[4] Endure. [5] Hoar-frost.

Nine nichts to Martinmas *
Will soon wear away."

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."
—GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans † dance,
Or owre the lays,[1] in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the cove,‡ to stray and rove,
Among the rocks and streams
To sport that night.

Among the bonny winding banks
Where Doon rins, wimplin', clear,
Where Bruce § ance ruled the martial ranks,
And shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, country-folks
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, and pou[2] their stocks,
And haud their Halloween
Fu' blithe that night.

The lasses feat,[3] and cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when they 're fine;
Their faces blithe, fu' sweetly kythe,[4]
Hearts leal,[5] and warm, and kin':
The lads sae trig,[6] wi' wooer-babs,[7]
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate,[8] and some wi' gabs,[9]
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whiles fast at night.

Then, first and foremost, through the kail,
Their stocks || maun a' be sought ance;

---

1 Fields. 2 Pull. 3 Trim. 4 Show.
5 True. 6 Spruce. 7 Double loops. 8 Bashful.
9 Talk.

* Martinmas is one of the removing terms

† Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis. *B*

‡ A noted cavern near Colean-house, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt of fairies. —*B.*

§ The famous family of that name, the ancestors of Robert Bruce, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick. —*B.*

|| The first ceremony of Halloween is pulling each a stock or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird,

They steek[1] their een, and graip[2] and wale,[3]
For muckle anes and straught anes.
Poor hav'rel[4] Will fell aff the drift,
And wander'd through the bow-kail,
And pou't, for want o' better shift,
A runt was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't[5] that night.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar and cry a' throu'ther;
The very wee things, toddlin',[6] rin,
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
And gif the custoc's sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs[7] they taste them;
Syne cozily,[8] aboon the door,
Wi' cannie[9] care, they 've placed them
To lie that night.

The lasses staw[10] frae 'mang them a'
To pou their stalks o' corn:*
But Rab slips out, and jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard and fast;
Loud skirl'd[11] a' the lasses;
But her tap-pickle maist was lost,
When kitlin'[12] in the fause-house†
Wi' him that night.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordit nits‡
Are round and round divided,
And mony lads' and lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:

---

1 Close. 2 Grope. 3 Choose. 4 Half-witted.
5 Crooked. 6 Tottering. 7 Clasp-knives. 8 Comfortably.
9 Gentle. 10 Stole. 11 Screamed. 12 Cuddling.

* earth, stick to the root, that is tocher or fortune, and the taste of the custoc, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names in question.—*B.*

They go to the barn-yard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the top-pickle that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.—*B*

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timmer, &c., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a fause-house.—*B*

‡ Burning the nuts is a famous charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and, accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.—*B.*

Some kindle coothie,[1] side by side,
And burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie ee;
Wha 'twas she wadna tell;
But this is Jock, and this is me,
She says in to hersel:
He bleezed owre her, and she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
Till, fuff! he started up the lum,[2]
And Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see 't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his bow-kail runt,
Was brunt wi' primsie Mallie;
And Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,[3]
To be compared to Willie;
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
And her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swore, by jing,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel and Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
Till white in ase they 're sobbin';
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to leuk for 't:
Rob, stowlins, prie'd[4] her bonny mou',
Fu' cozie[5] in the neuk for 't,
Unseen that night.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin'[6] at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel:
She through the yard the nearest taks,
And to the kiln she goes then,
And darklins graipit for the bauks,[7]
And in the blue-clue* throws then,
Right fear't that night.

[1] Agreeably. [2] Chimney. [3] Pet. [4] Stealthily kissed.
[5] Snugly. [6] Talking. [7] Cross-beams.

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread, demand "Wha haunds?" *i.e.*, who holds. An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.—*B.*

And aye she win't,[1] and aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin',[2]
Till something held within the pat,
Guid Lord! but she was quakin'!
But whether 'twas the deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en',
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She didna wait on talkin'
To spier[3] that night.

Wee Jenny to her grannie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, grannie?
I'll eat the apple* at the glass
I gat frae Uncle Johnnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,[4]
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
She notice't na, an aizle[5] brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out through that night.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
I daur you try sic sportin',
As seek the foul thief ony place,
For him to spae[6] your fortune;
Nae doubt but ye may get a sight!
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
And lived and died deleeret
On sic a night.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherramoor,—
I mind't as weel 's yestreen,
I was a gilpey[7] then, I'm sure
I wasna past fifteen;
The simmer had been cauld and wat,
And stuff was unco green;
And aye a rantin' kirn[8] we gat,
And just on Halloween
It fell that night.

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow:
His son gat Eppie Sim wi wean,
That lived in Achmacalla:

---

1 Winded. 2 Dallying. 3 Inquire. 4 Smoke.
5 Cinder. 6 Foretell. 7 Young girl. 8 Harvest home.

* Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and, some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your co jugal companion to be will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.—*B.*

He gat hemp-seed,* I mind it weel.
And he made unco light o't;
But mony a day was by himsel,
He was sae sairly frighted
That very night."

Then up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
And he swore by his conscience,
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense.
The auld guidman raught[1] down the pock,
And out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bade him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Some time when nae ane see'd him,
And try 't that night.

He marches through amang the stacks,
Though he was something sturtin;[2]
The graip[3] he for a harrow taks,
And haurls[4] it at his curpin;[5]
And every now and then he says,
"Hemp-seed, I saw thee,
And her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, and draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistled up Lord Lennox' march
To keep his courage cheery;
Although his hair began to arch,
He was say fley'd[6] and eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,
And then a grane and gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
And tumbled wi' a wintle[7]
Out-owre that night.

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
And young and auld cam rinnin' out
To hear the sad narration:
He swore 'twas hilchin[8] Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie[9] Merran Humphie,

---

[1] Reached. [2] Timorous. [3] Dung-fork. [4] Drags.
[5] Rear. [6] Frightened. [7] Stagger. [8] Halting.
[9] Crookbacked.

* Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it wi' anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, "Hemp seed, I saw thee; hemp-seed, I saw thee;" and him or her that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me and shaw thee," that is, show thyself; in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me, and harrow thee."—*R*

Till, stop! she trotted through them a'—
And wha was it but grumph[1]
Asteer that night!

Meg fain wad to the barn hae gaen,
To win three wechts[2] o' naething;*
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle[3] nits,
And twa red-cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That very nicht.

She turns the key wi' cannie[4] thraw,
And owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
Syne bauldly in she enters:
A ratton rattled up the wa',
And she cried, Lord, preserve her!
And ran through midden-hole and a',
And pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

They hoy't[5] out Will, wi' sair advice;
They hecht[6] him some fine braw ane;
It chanced the stack he faddom't thrice,†
Was timmer-propt for thrawin';
He taks a swirlie,[7] auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome[8] carlin;
And loot a winze,[9] and drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes[10] cam haurlin'
Aff 's nieves[11] that night.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlin;
But, och! that night, amang the shaws,[12]
She got a fearfu' settlin'!

---

1 The pig. 2 Corn-baskets. 3 Few. 4 Gentle.
5 Urged. 6 Promised. 7 Knotty. 8 Hideous.
9 Oath. 10 Shreds. 11 Hands. 12 Woods.

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear may shut the doors and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our country dialect we call a wecht; and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue marking the employment or station in life.—*B.*

† Take an opportunity of going unnoticed to a bean-stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.—*B.*

She through the whins,[1] and by the cairn,
And owre the hill gaed scrievin,
Whare three lairds' lands met at a burn,*
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As through the glen it wimpl't;[2]
Whyles round a rocky scaur[3] it strays;
Whyles in a wiel[4] it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Amang the brackens, on the brae,
Between her and the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,[5]
Gat up and gae a croon:[6]
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool![7]
Near lav'rock-height she jumpit;
But mist a fit, and in the pool
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The luggies three† are ranged,
And every time great care is ta'en
To see them duly changed:
Auld Uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' Mar's year did desire,
Because he gat the toom[8] dish thrice,
He heaved them on the fire
In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, and friendly cracks,
I wat they didna weary;
And unco tales, and funny jokes,
Their sports were cheap and cheery;

[1] Gorse. [2] Wheeled. [3] Cliff. [4] Eddy.
[5] Unhoused heifer. [6] Moan. [7] Burst its case. [8] Empty.

* You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south-running spring or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and, some time near midnight an apparition having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.—*B.*

† Take three dishes; put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty: blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is reneated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.—*B.*

In order, on the clean hearthstane,
The luggies three are ranged,
And every time great care is ta'en
To see them duly changed.

—*Halloween, page* 32.

Till butter'd so'ns,* wi' fragrant lunt,[1]
Set a' their gabs[2] a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,[3]
They parted aff careerin'
Fu' blythe that night.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN.

A DIRGE.

'Several of the poems," says Gilbert Burns, "were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author's. He used to remark to me that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, 'Man was Made to Mourn,' was composed."

An old Scottish ballad had suggested the form and spirit of this poem. "I had an old grand-uncle" says the poet to Mrs Dunlop, "with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years. The good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of 'The Life and Age of Man.'" From the poet's mother, Mr Cromek procured a copy of this composition; it commences thus:—

"Upon the sixteen hundred year
Of God and fifty-three
Frae Christ was born, who bought us dear,
As writings testifie;
On January the sixteenth day,
As I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say
Ah! man was made to moan!"

WHEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One evening, as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wanderest thou?"
Began the reverend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasures rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth with me to mourn
The miseries of man.

---

1 Smoke. 2 Mouths. 3 Spirits.

* Sowens.—The shell of the corn (called, in the rural districts, shellings) is steeped in water until all the fine meal particles are extracted; the liquid is then strained off, and boiled with milk or butter until it thickens.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Outspreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride:
I've seen yon weary winter sun
Twice forty times return,
And every time has added proofs
That man was made to mourn.

"O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Misspending all thy precious hours,
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

"Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn;
Then age and want—oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

"A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, oh! what crowds in every land
Are wretched and forlorn!
Through weary life this lesson learn—
That man was made to mourn.

"Many and sharp the numerous ills
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves—
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heaven-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

"See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, though a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I 'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By nature's law design'd—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?

"Yet let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast;
This partial view of humankind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppress'd, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn.

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend—
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That weary-laden mourn!"

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Gilbert Burns gives the following distinct account of the origin of this poem,—"Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God!' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author, the world is indebted for 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' When Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons—those precious breathing times to the labouring part of the community—and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard anything by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul. The cotter, in the 'Saturday Night,' is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotion, and exhortations; yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us were 'at service out among the farmers roun'.' Instead of our depositing our 'sair-won penny-fee' with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home, thereby having an opportunity of watching the progress of our young minds, and forming in them early habits of piety and virtue; and from this motive alone did he engage in farming, the source of all his difficulties and distresses."

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short but simple annals of the poor."—GRAY.

My loved, my honour'd, much-respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end:
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways:
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;[1]
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And, weary, o'er the moor his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee things, toddlin', stacher through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin' noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinking bonnily,
His clean hearthstane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour and his toil.

Belyve,[2] the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, among the farmers roun':
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A canny errand to a neibor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her ee,
Comes hame, perhaps to show a braw new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly speers:[3]
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnoticed, fleet;
Each tells the uncos[4] that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new—
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warnèd to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eydent[5] hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk[6] or play:

[1] Moan. [2] By and by. [3] Inquires.
[4] News. [5] Diligent. [6] Dally.

The toil-worn cotter frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary o'er the moor his course does homeward bend.
—*The Cotter's Saturday Night*, page 36.

"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door,
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's ee, and flush her cheek,
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears it 's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate[1] and lathefu',[2] scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel pleased to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.[3]

O happy love!—where love like this is found!—
O heart-felt raptures!—bliss beyond compare!
I 've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare—
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch,[4] chief of Scotia's food:
The soupe[5] their only hawkie[6] does afford,
That 'yont the hallan[7] snugly chows her cood:

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1 Bashful. 2 Hesitating. 3 Other people. 4 Porridge
5 Milk. 6 Cow. 7 Porch.

The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck,[1] fell,[2]
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid:
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond[3] auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.[4]

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[5] wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales[6] a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship GOD!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny:
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How HE, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:
How His first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing," *
That thus they all shall meet in future days:

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1 Cheese. 2 Biting. 3 Twelvemonth.
4 In Blossom. 5 Grey temples. 6 Selects.

* Pope's "Windsor Forest."

There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole:
But, haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol.

Then homeward all take off their several way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request
That HE, who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of GOD;"
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind.
What is a lordling's pomp?—a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crown and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide
That stream'd through Wallace's undaunted heart:
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
Oh, never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

Gilbert Burns says:—"It was, I think, in the winter of 1784, as we were going with carts for coals to the family fire, (and I could yet point out the particular spot,) that Robert first repeated to me the 'Address to the Deil.' The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have from various quarters of this august personage."

"Burns," says Carlyle, "even pities the very devil, without knowing, I am sure, that my uncle Toby had been beforehand here with him! 'He is the father of curses and lies,' said Dr Slop, 'and is cursed and damned already.' 'I am sorry for it,' said my uncle Toby. A poet without love were a physical and metaphysical impossibility."

This tenderness towards the devil is not uncommon among the poet's countrymen, and is even to be met with in the pulpit. We have heard of a Fifeshire minister, of the last century, who used occasionally to pray for the devil in this wise:—"And, O Lord, gin it be Thy will, hae mercy on the puir deil;" and of another minister, who both spoke and preached in the vernacular, who, when the devil was mentioned, would remonstrate thus:—"Nae doot devil is correct eneuch; but ca him the deil, it soonds mair freendly like."

> "O prince! O chief of many throned powers,
> That led th' embattled seraphim to war!"—MILTON.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,*
Wha in yon cavern grim and sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges† about the brunstane cootie,‡
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
And let poor damned bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie
E'en to a deil,
To skelp and scaud poor dogs like me,
And hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, and great thy fame;
Far kenn'd and noted is thy name:
And though yon lowin' heugh's[1] thy hame,
Thou travels far:
And, faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.[2]

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[1] Burning pit. [2] Apt to be frightened.

* A well-known term applied to Satan in Scotland in allusion to his hoofs or *cloots*

† *Spairges* is the best Scots word in its place I ever met with. The deil is no standing flinging the liquid brimstone on his friends with a ladle, but we see him standing at a large boiling vat, with something like a golf-bat, striking the liquid this way and that way aslant, with all his might, making it fly through the whole apartment, while the inmates are winking and holding up their arms to defend their faces. This is precisely the idea conveyed by *spairging*: flinging it in any other way would be *laving* or splashing.—THE EITRICK SHEPHERD.

‡ The legitimate meaning of this word is a small wooden tub; here it implies not only the utensil, but liquid brimstone; just as a toper talks of his *can* or his *cogie*, meaning both the liquor and the utensil in which it is held.

Whyles ranging like a roaring lion,
For prey a' holes and corners tryin':
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin',
Tirlin'[1] the kirks;
Whyles in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray:
Or where auld ruin'd castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way
Wi' eldritch croon.[2]

When twilight did my grannie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft yont the dike she's heard you bummin',
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, through the boortries[3] comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin'[4] light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve[5] did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor quaick, quaick,
Amang the springs,
Awa' ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Let warlocks grim, and wither'd hags,
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs and dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues
Owre howkit[6] dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil and pain,
May plunge and plunge the kirn in vain:
For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
By witching skill;
And dawtit[7] twal-pint hawkie's gaen
As yell's[8] the bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse
On young guidmen, fond, keen, and crouse;

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1 Uncovering. 2 Unearthly moan. 3 Elder-trees. 4 Glancing.
5 Fist. 6 Disinterred. 7 Petted. 8 Milkless

When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
And float the jinglin' icy-boord,
Then water-kelpies haunt the foord,
By your direction;
And 'nighted travellers are allured
To their destruction.

And aft your moss-traversing spunkies*
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is:
The bleezin', curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When mason's mystic word and grip
In storms and tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell!

Lang syne, in Eden's bonny yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
And all the soul of love they shared,
The raptured hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flowery sward,
In shady bower.†

Then you, ye auld sneck-drawing dog!‡
Ye came to Paradise incog.,
And play'd on man a cursèd brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
And gied the infant warld a shog,[1]
'Maist ruin'd a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,[2]
Wi' reekit duds,[3] and reestit gizz,[4]

---

[1] Shake. [2] Hurry. [3] Smoked clothes. [4] Singed hair.

* The will o' the wisp.

† This verse ran originally thus:—

Lang syne in Eden's happy scene,
When strappin' Adam's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonny Jean,
My dearest part,
A dancin', sweet, young, handsome quean,
Wi' guileless heart.

‡ Literally, withdrawing a latch burglariously;—here it means taking an advantage getting into Paradise on false pretences.

Ye did present your smoutie[1] phiz
'Mang better folk,
And sklented[2] on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke?

And how ye gat him i' your thrall,
And brak him out o' house and hall,
While scabs and blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
And lowsed his ill-tongued, wicked scawl,[3]
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares and fechtin' fierce,
Sin' that day Michael did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan[4] tongue or Erse,[5]
In prose or rhyme.

And now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin',
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin
To your black pit;
But, faith, he'll turn a corner jinkin',[6]
And cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
Oh, wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins[7] might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
Even for your sake!

THE JOLLY BEGGARS.

A CANTATA.

"The Jolly Beggars," without question the most dramatic and most humorous of all the poet's productions, was written in the year 1785, but was not published during his lifetime. Previous editors have asserted that it first appeared in a volume published in Glasgow in 1801, entitled, "Poems Ascribed to the Ayrshire Bard." From a recent notice of Mr Alexander Smith's edition of the poet's works in the Edinburgh *Daily Review*, by its able editor, Mr J. B. Manson, it would appear that the poem was issued in 1798 as a chap-book, and circulated along with "Wise Willie and Wittie Eppie," "George Buchanan, the King's Fool," "Leper the Tailor," &c. &c. Mr Manson having a copy of it in that form. We remember, upwards of a quarter of a century ago, that every female pedlar's basket, in addition to needles, thread, tape, boot-laces, &c. &c., contained a collection of chap-books; and we have bought "Tam o' Shanter," "The Jolly Beggars," and the "Cotter's Saturday Night," in this form for a penny a piece. The cheap weekly serials and the penny newspapers have now,

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1 Dirty. 2 Glanced. 3 Scolding wife. 4 Lowland.
5 Celtic. 6 Dodging. 7 Perhaps.

however, driven this kind of literature out of the market; but the every day speech of the elders of our rural population is still interlarded with the rough jocosities and humours of these somewhat loose tales. It is said that, as the poet had given away the only copy he had of "The Jolly Beggars," he had quite forgotten its existence and when some one spoke of it, he was only able to remember that it had one good song in it, the only two lines of which he could repeat were—

"Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest."

"Poosie Nansie's," the scene of "The Jolly Beggars," was a public-house in Mauchline resorted to by vagrants of the lowest class, and kept by a Mrs Gibson, known as "Poosie Nansie," the mother of "Racer Jess," mentioned in "The Holy Fair," the latter a strange, half-daft creature, who had run races for wagers; hence her patronymic; and who, on account of her speed of foot, was frequently employed to run urgent and distant messages.

This famous poem, or rather drama, is founded on a scene actually witnessed by the poet. In company with his friends, John Richmond and James Smith, he was passing Poosie Nansie's, when their attention being attracted by sounds of mirth and jollity proceeding from the interior, they entered, and were rapturously welcomed by the motley band of beggars and tinkers carousing there. Burns professed to have been greatly delighted with the scene, more especially with the jolly behaviour of a maimed old soldier In a few days he recited portions of the poem to John Richmond, who used to speak of songs by a sweep and a sailor which did not appear in the completed manuscript.

We do not consider it to be our mission to venture to criticise the works of our poet, but we cannot help alluding to the exquisite felicity with which the poem opens. How happily the season of the year is indicated by the falling and fluttering leaves, the northern blast, the infant frosts, and the driving hailstones. How rapid the transition from this beautiful picture of the chill November night to the merry core "o' randie, gangrel bodies," in the full swing of their rough debauch. Notice how the coarseness of the incidents are, without undue grossness, graphically pictured in the rough and free vernacular. It is his doxy, and not his dearie, the soldier hugs, and she is the tousie drab whose mouth, like an aumos dish, is upturned to be saluted. And the smacking kiss finds its fitting illustration in the cracking of a cadger's whip. It is so throughout — matter and spirit are always faithful to the scene and the circumstance.

Sir Walter Scott says:—"'The Jolly Beggars,' for humorous description and nice discrimination of character, is inferior to no poem of the same length in the whole range of English poetry. The scene, indeed, is laid in the very lowest department of low life, the actors being a set of strolling vagrants, met to carouse and barter their rags and plunder for liquor in a hedge alehouse. Yet, even in describing the movements of such a group, the native taste of the poet has never suffered his pen to slide into any thing coarse or disgusting. The extravagant glee and outrageous frolic of the beggars are ridiculously contrasted with their maimed limbs, rags, and crutches; the sordid and squalid circumstances of their appearance are judiciously thrown into the shade. The group, it must be observed, is of Scottish character; yet the distinctions are too well marked to escape even the southron. The most prominent persons are a maimed soldier and his female companion, a hackneyed follower of the camp; a stroller, late the consort of a Highland ketterer or sturdy beggar,—'but weary fa' the waefu' woodie!' Being now at liberty she becomes an object of rivalry between a 'pigmy scraper with his fiddle' and a strolling tinker The latter, a desperate bandit, like most of his profession, terrifies the musician out of the field, and is preferred by the damsel of course. A wandering ballad-singer, with a brace of doxies, is last introduced upon the stage. Each of these mendicants sing a song in character; and such a collection of humorous lyrics, connected with vivid poetical description is not, perhaps, to be paralleled in the English language. The concluding ditty, chanted by the ballad-singer at the request of the company, whose mirth and fun have now grown fast and furious,' and set them above all sublunary terrors of jails and whipping-posts, is certainly far superior to anything in the 'Beggar's Opera.

where alone we could expect to find its parallel! In one or two passages of 'The Jolly Beggars,' the muse has slightly trespassed on decorum, where, in the language of Scottish song,

> 'High kilted was she,
> As she gaed owre the lea.'

Something, however, is to be allowed to the nature of the subject, and something to the education of the poet; and if, from veneration to the names of Swift and Dryden, we tolerate the grossness of the one, and the indelicacy of the other, the respect due to that of Burns may surely claim indulgence for a few light strokes of broad humour."

RECITATIVO.

WHEN lyart[1] leaves bestrew the yird,[2]
Or, wavering like the baukie-bird,[3]
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,[4]
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch[5] drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core
O' randie, gangrel[6] bodies,
In Poosie Nansie's held the splore,[7]
To drink their orra duddies:[8]
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The vera girdle * rang.

First, neist the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel braced wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay wi' him his arm,
Wi' usquebae and blankets warm—
She blinket on her sodger:
And aye he gied the tousie drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab,
Just like an aumos dish.†
Ilk smack still, did crack still,
Just like a cadger's ‡ whup,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up—

---

[1] Gray. [2] Earth. [3] The bat. [4] Dash.
[5] Thin white frost. [6] Vagrant. [7] Merry meeting. [8] Odd garments

* A circular iron plate, on which, when hung over the fire, oaten cakes are baked.

† The aumos, or beggar's dish, was a wooden platter or bowl, which every mendicant carried in the olden time as part of his professional accoutrements. It was used to receive the aumos or alms in the shape of oat meal, broth, milk, or porridge.

‡ A cadger is a vendor of various kinds of merchandise, who employs a horse or ass in carrying about his wares from place to place.

AIR.

TUNE—"Soldiers' Joy."

I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come:
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breathed his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;*
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro† low was laid at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batteries,‡
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot§ to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

And now though I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle, and my callet,
As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

What though with hoary locks I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home,
When the t'other bag I sell, and the t'other bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the kebars[1] sheuk
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattons[2] backward leuk,
And seek the benmost[3] bore;

A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirled out "Encore!"
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

---

[1] Rafters. [2] Rats. [3] Innermost.

* The battle-field in front of Quebec, where General Wolfe fell in the arms of victory in 1759.

† El Moro, a strong castle defending Havannah, which was gallantly stormed when the city was taken by the British in 1762.

‡ The destruction of the Spanish floating batteries, during the famous siege of Gibraltar in 1782, on which occasion the gallant Captain Curtis rendered the most signal service.

§ George Augustus Elliot, created Lord Heathfield, for his memorable defence of Gibraltar, during the siege of three years. He died in 1790.

AIR.

TUNE—"Soldier Laddie."

I once was a maid, though I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie,
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church;
He ventured the soul, and I risk'd the body,
'Twas then I proved false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduced me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at a Cunningham fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoiced at a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have lived—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady.
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Poor Merry Andrew in the neuk,
Sat guzzling wi' a tinkler hizzie;
They mind't na wha the chorus teuk,
Between themselves they were sae busy:
At length wi' drink and courting dizzy,
He stoiter'd up and made a face;
Then turn'd, and laid a smack on Grizzie,
Syne tuned his pipes wi' grave grimace:

AIR.

TUNE—"Auld Sir Symon."

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's fou,
Sir Knave is a fool in a session;
He's there but a 'prentice, I trow,
But I am a fool by profession

My grannie she bought me a beuk,
And I held awa' to the school;
I fear I my talent misteuk,
But what will ye hae of a fool?

For drink I would venture my neck,
A hizzie's the half o' my craft,
But what could ye other expect,
Of ane that 's avowedly daft?

I ance was tied up like a stirk,[1]
For civilly swearing and quaffing!
I ance was abused in the kirk,
For touzling[2] a lass i' my daffin.[3]

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer:
There 's even, I'm tauld, i' the court
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

Observed ye yon reverend lad
Mak faces to tickle the mob?
He rails at our mountebank squad—
It 's rivalship just i' the job.

And now my conclusion I 'll tell,
For faith I 'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that 's a fool for himsel,
Gude Lord! he 's far dafter than I.

RECITATIVO.

Then neist outspak a raucle carlin,[4]
Wha ken't fu' weel to cleek the sterling,
For mony a pursie she had hookit,
And had in mony a well been doukit.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie![5]
Wi' sighs and sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman:—

AIR.

TUNE—"Oh, an ye were Dead, Guidman!"

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lawland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There 's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

---

[1] Bullock. [2] Rumpling. [3] Merriment.
[4] Stout Beldam. [5] The gallows.

With his philabeg and tartan plaid,
And guid claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,
And lived like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lawland face he fearèd none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They 've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
Nae comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha used at trysts and fairs to driddle,[1]
Her strappin' limb and gaucy middle
(He reach'd nae higher)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn 't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, and upward ee,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an arioso key,
The wee Apollo,
Set off wi' allegretto glee
His giga solo.

AIR.

TUNE—"Whistle owre the lave o't."

Let me ryke[2] up to dight[3] that tear,
And go wi' me and be my dear,
And then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

[1] Play. [2] Reach. [3] Wipe.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
And a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
And oh! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bouse about till Daddy Care
Sings whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke,
And sun oursels about the dike,
And at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heaven o' charms,
And white I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, and a' sic harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,[1]
As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a roosty rapier—

He swore by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,*
Unless he wad from that time forth
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly ee, poor Tweedle-dee
Upon his hunkers[2] bended,
And pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.

But though his little heart did grieve
When round the tinkler press'd her,
He feign'd to snirtle[3] in his sleeve,
When thus the caird address'd her:—

AIR.

TUNE—"Clout the Caudron."

My bonny lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station:

[1] Tinker. [2] Hams. [3] Laugh.

* To spit him like a plover.

I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation.
I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron:
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
To go and clout[1] the caudron.
I've ta'en the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a' his noise and ca'prin',
And tak a share wi' those that bear
The budget and the apron.
And by that stoup, my faith and houp,
And by that dear Kilbagie,
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.[2]
And by that stoup, &c.

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevail'd—the unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love, o'ercome sae sair,
And partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
That show'd a man of spunk,
Wish'd unison between the pair,
And made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But urchin Cupid shot a shaft
That play'd a dame a shavie,[3]
The fiddler raked her fore and aft,
Ahint the chicken cavie.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's craft,[4]
Though limping wi' the spavie,
He hirpled up, and lap like daft,
And shored[5] them Dainty Davie
O' boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed,
Though Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever miss'd it.
He had nae wish but—to be glad,
Nor want but—when he thirsted;
He hated nought but—to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested
His sang that night:—

---

1 Patch. 2 Throat. 3 A trick.
4 A ballad-singer. 5 Offered.

AIR.

TUNE—"For a' that, and a' that."

I am a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks, and a' that:
But Homer-like, the glowrin' byke,[1]
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle 's a' that;
I 've lost but ane, I 've twa behin',
I 've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' stank,[2]
Castalia's burn, and a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My Helicon I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love, and a' that:
But for how lang the flee may stang,
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks and craft hae put me daft,
They 've ta'en me in, and a' that;
But clear your decks, and here 's the sex!
I like the jads for a' that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle 's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They 're welcome till 't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sang the bard—and Nansie's wa's
Shook wi' a thunder of applause,
Re-echoed from each mouth;
They toom'd their pokes and pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowin' drouth.[3]

[1] The staring crowd. [2] Pool. [3] Burning thirst.

Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
The poet did request,
To loose his pack and wale[1] a sang,
A ballad o' the best;
He, rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, and found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

TUNE—"Jolly Mortals, fill your Glasses."

See! the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where!
A fig, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out—Amen!

[1] Choose

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty 's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

THE VISION.

This beautiful poem depicts, in the highest strain of poetical eloquence, a struggle which was constantly going on in the poet's mind between the meanness and poverty of his position and his higher aspirations and hopes of independence, which he found it impossible ever to realise. It must have been evident to his mind that poetry alone was not to elevate him above the reach of worldly cares; yet in this poem, as in many others, he accepts the poetical calling as its own sweet and sufficient reward. In the appearance of the Muse of Coila, the matter is settled after a fashion as beautiful as poetical. In the Kilmarnock edition of his poems, the allusion to his Jean in his description of the Muse's appearance—

"Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen,
And such a leg! my bonny Jean
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else cam near it—"

was replaced by the name of another charmer in consequence, it is presumed, of his quarrel with her father. When the Edinburgh edition appeared, his old affections had again asserted their sway, and her name was restored. In a letter to Mrs Dunlop, dated February 1788, the poet, in allusion to Miss Rachel Dunlop, one of her daughters, being engaged on a painting representing "The Vision," says:—"I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila. I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour as Dr Beattie says to Ross, the poet, of his Muse Scota, from which, by the by, I took the idea of Coila; ('tis a poem of Beattie's in the Scottish dialect, which perhaps you have never seen):—

'Ye shake your head, but o' my fegs,
Ye've set auld Scota on her legs;
Lang had she lien wi' buffs and flegs,
Bumbazed and dizzie;
Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs—
Wae's me, poor hizzie!'"

DUAN FIRST.*

THE sun had closed the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,†
And hunger'd maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,

---

* *Duan*, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his "Cathloda," vol. ii. of Macpherson's translation.—*B.*

† *Curling* is a wintry game peculiar to the southern counties of Scotland. When the ice is sufficiently strong on the lochs, a number of individuals, each provided with a large stone of the shape of an oblate spheroid, smoothed at the bottom, range themselves on two sides, and being furnished with handles, play against each other. The game resembles bowls, but is much more animated, and keenly enjoyed. It is well characterised by the poet as a *roaring play*.

While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thrasher's weary flingin'-tree [1]
The lee-lang day had tired me;
And when the day had closed his ee,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence, * right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,[2]
I sat and eyed the spewing reek,[3]
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking smeek,[4]
The auld clay biggin';
And heard the restless rattons [5] squeak
About the riggin'.

All in this mottie,[6] misty clime,
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
And done naething,
But stringin' blethers [7] up in rhyme,
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might by this hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, and clerkit
My cash-account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, muttering, Blockhead! coof! [8]
And heaved on high my waukit loof,[9]
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof
Till my last breath—

When, click! the string the sneck [10] did draw
And, jee! the door gaed to the wa';
And by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin' bright,
A tight, outlandish hizzie, braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye needna doubt, I held my whisht;
The infant aith, half-form'd, was crusht

[1] The flail. [2] Fireside. [3] Smoke. [4] Smoke
[5] Rats. [6] Hazy [7] Nonsense. [8] Fool.
[9] Hardened palm. [10] Latch.

* The parlour of the farm-house of Mossgiel—the only apartment besides the kitchen.

I glower'd as eerie 's I 'd been dusht[1]
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,
And steppèd ben.[2]

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted gracefu' round her brows—
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
By that same token:
And come to stop those reckless vows,
Would soon be broken.

A "hare-brain'd, sentimental trace"
Was strongly markèd in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye e'en turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonny Jean
Could only peer it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight,[3] and clean,
Nane else cam near it.

Her mantle large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
A well-known land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods
There, well-fed Irwine stately thuds:[4]
Auld hermit Ayr staw[5] through his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough* rear'd her head:
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race

[1] Frightened. [2] Into the room. [3] Handsome, well-formed
[4] Sounds. [5] Stole.

* The town of Ayr.

To every nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

By stately tower or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With features stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race * heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dyed steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their suthron foes.

His country's saviour,† mark him well!
Bold Richardton's‡ heroic swell;
The chief on Sark § who glorious fell,
In high command;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptred Pictish shade ‖
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race, portray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featured, undismay'd
They strode along.

Through many a wild romantic grove,¶
Near many a hermit-fancied cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,)
In musing mood,
An aged judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe
The learnèd sire and son I saw,**

---

* The Wallaces.—*B.*

† Sir William Wallace.—*B.*

‡ Adam Wallace of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.—*B.*

§ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought in 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.—*B*

‖ Coilus, king of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial-place is still shown.—*B.*

¶ Barskimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice-Clerk.—*B.* (Sir Thomas Miller of Glenlee, afterwards President of the Court of Session.)

** The Rev. Dr Matthew Stewart, the celebrated mathematician, and his son Mr Dugald Stewart the elegant expositor of the Scottish school of metaphysics are here meant, their villa of Catrine being situated on the Ayr.

To nature's God and nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw;
That, to adore.

Brydone's brave ward * I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye:
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot name on high
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly seeming fair;
A whispering throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet:—

"All hail! my own inspirèd bard!
In me thy native Muse regard;
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low!
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

"Know, the great genius of this land
Has many a light, aërial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

"They Scotia's race among them share;
Some fire the soldier on to dare:
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tunefu' art.

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They ardent, kindling spirits, pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

"And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,

* Colonel Fullarton.—*B.*

They bind the wild, poetic rage,
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

"Hence Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence Dempster's zeal-inspirèd tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious Beattie sung
His Minstrel lay;
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The sceptic's bays.

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of humankind,
The rustic bard, the labouring hind,
The artisan;
All choose, as various they're inclined,
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threatening storm some, strongly, rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blithe o'er the hill.

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the labourer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

"Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard:
And careful note each opening grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I—Coila my name,
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells,* chiefs of fame,
Held ruling power,
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

"With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely-caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fired at the simple, artless lays,
Of other times.

* The Loudoun branch of the Campbells is here meant. Mossgiel, and much of the neighbouring ground, was then the property of the Earl of Loudon.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the north his fleecy store
Drove through the sky,
I saw grim nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish'd every floweret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In every grove,
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their evening joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild, send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

"I taught thy manners painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"Yet all beneath the unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
Though large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
And, trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor kings' regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine—
A rustic bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve the dignity of man,
With soul erect;
And trust, the universal plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou this," she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

A WINTER NIGHT.

This poem was first printed in the second, or first Edinburgh, edition of the poet's works. Carlyle says of it—"How touching is it, amid the gloom of personal misery that broods over and around him, that, amid the storm, he still thinks of the cattle, the silly sheep, and the wee harmless birdies!—yes, the tenant of the mean lowly hut has the heart to pity all these. This is worth a whole volume of homilies on mercy, for it is the voice of mercy itself. Burns lives in sympathy: his soul rushes forth into all the realms of being: nothing that has existence can be indifferent to him."

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you,
From seasons such as these?"—SHAKESPEARE.

When biting Boreas, fell[1] and doure,[2]
Sharp shivers through the leafless bower;
When Phœbus gies a short-lived glower[3]
Far south the lift,[4]
Dim-darkening through the flaky shower,
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or through the mining outlet bocked,[5]
Down headlong hurl.

---

1 Keen. 2 Stern. 3 Stare. 4 Sky. 5 Belched

Listening the doors and winnocks[1] rattle,
I thought me on the ourie[2] cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle[3]
O' winter war,
And through the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,[4]
Beneath a scaur.[5]

Ilk happing[6] bird, wee, helpless thing,
That, in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,
And close thy ee!

Even you, on murdering errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exiled,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cot spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now Phœbe, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffled, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn, stole:—

"Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, thou bitter-biting frost!
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows!
Not all your rage, as now united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,
Than heaven-illumined man on brother man bestows!

"See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
Even in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pamper'd Luxury, Flattery by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud Property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glittering show,
A creature of another kind,
Some coarser substance unrefined,
Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.

[1] Windows. [2] Shivering. [3] Dashing storm.
[4] Struggle [5] Cliff. [6] Hopping.

Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The powers you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour dark the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasted Honour turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears and unavailing prayers!
Perhaps this hour, in misery's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!

"O ye who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think for a moment on his wretched fate
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill satisfied keen nature's clamorous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While through the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where Guilt and poor Misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushèd low
By cruel Fortune's undeservèd blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!"

I heard na mair, for chanticleer
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impress'd my mind—
Through all His works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

SCOTCH DRINK.

This poem, written after the manner of Fergusson's "Caller Water," is not to be taken as evidence of the poet's feelings and practices. It was suggested, along with the following poem, by the withdrawal of an Act of Parliament empowering Duncan Forbes of Culloden to distil whisky on his barony of Ferintosh, free of duty, in return for services rendered to the Government. This privilege was a source of great revenue to the family; and as Ferintosh whisky was cheaper than that produced elsewhere, it became very popular, and the name Ferintosh thus became something like a synonyme for whisky over the

country. Compensation for the loss of privilege, to the tune of £21 580, was awarded to the Forbes family by a jury. Attention was further drawn to "the national beverage" at this time by the vexatious and oppressive way in which the Excise laws were enforced at the Scotch distilleries. Many distillers abandoned the business; and as barley was beginning to fall in price in consequence, the county gentlemen supported the distillers and an Act was passed relieving the trade from the obnoxious supervision. These circumstances gave the poet his cue; and the subject was one calculated to evoke his wildest humour. Writing to Robert Muir, Kilmarnock, he says, "I here enclose you my 'Scotch Drink,' and may the —— follow with a blessing for your edification. I hope some time before we hear the gowk, [cuckoo,] to have the pleasure of seeing you at Kilmarnock, when I intend we shall have a gill between us in a mutchkin stoup, which will be a great comfort and consolation to your humble servant, R. B."

> "Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
> That's sinking in despair;
> And liquor guid to fire his bluid,
> That's prest wi' grief and care;
> There let him bouse, and deep carouse,
> Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
> Till he forgets his loves or debts,
> And minds his griefs no more."
> —SOLOMON'S PROVERBS xxxi. 6, 7

LET other poets raise a fracas[1]
'Bout vines, and wines, and drucken Bacchus,
And crabbit names and stories wrack[2] us,
And grate our lug,[3]
I sing the juice Scotch beare can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O thou, my Muse! guid auld Scotch drink,
Whether through wimplin'[4] worms thou jink,[5]
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
To sing thy name!

Let husky wheat the haughs adorn,
And aits set up their awnie horn,[6]
And peas and beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones,[7] the wale o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boilin' flood
Wi' kail and beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, and keeps us livin';
Though life's a gift no worth receivin'

[1] A row. [2] Bother. [3] Ear. [4] Crooked.
[5] Steal. [6] Beard. [7] Cakes.

When heavy dragg'd wi' pine[1] and grievin';
But, oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin',[2]
Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair,
At 's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair,
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft clad in massy siller weed,[3]
Wi' gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,*
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens[4] fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Even godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspired,
When gaping they besiege the tents,†
Are doubly fired.

That merry night we get the corn in,
Oh, sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin' on a new-year morning
In cog or bicker,[5]
And just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
And gusty sucker![6]

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
And ploughmen gather wi' their graith,[7]
Oh, rare! to see thee fizz and freath
I' the lugget caup![8]
Then Burnewin[9] comes on like death
At every chap.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block and studdie[10] ring and reel,
Wi' dinsome clamour.

---

1 Pain. 2 Gliding gleesomely. 3 Silver jugs. 4 Relishest.
5 Wooden vessels. 6 Toothsome sugar. 7 Implements.
8 Wooden cup with ears. 9 The blacksmith. 10 Anvil.

* Ale is meant which is frequently mixed with porridge instead of milk.
† The tents for refreshment at out-of door communions. (See "Holy Fair.")

When skirlin' weanies[1] see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumblin' cuifs[2] their dearies slight;
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdy[3] gets a social night,
Or plack[4] frae them.

When neibors anger at a plea,
And just as wud as wud[5] can be,
How easy can the barley-bree
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte[6] her countrymen wi' treason!
But mony daily weet their weason[7]
Wi' liquors nice,
And hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier[8] her price.

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash!
Fell source o' mony a pain and brash![9]
'Twins mony a poor, doylt, drucken hash[10]
O' half his days;
And sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her worst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel,
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,[11]
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blether wrench,
And gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch[12]
O' sour disdain,
Out-owre a glass o' whisky punch
Wi' honest men.

O whisky! soul o' plays and pranks!
Accept a Bardie's gratefu' thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes—they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's a—es.

Thee, Ferintosh! oh, sadly lost!
Scotland lament frae coast to coast!

---

[1] Screaming children. [2] Awkward fools. [3] Midwife. [4] Coin.
[5] Mad. [6] Charge. [7] Throat [8] Ask. [9] Sickness.
[10] Rough fellow. [11] Meddle. [12] Face with a grin.

Now colic grips, and barkin' hoast,[1]
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes's charter'd boast,
Is ta'en awa'!

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the whisky-stells their prize!
Haud up thy han', deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers![2]
And bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor damn'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, and whisky gill,
And rowth[3] o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak a' the rest,
And deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs the best.

REMORSE.

A FRAGMENT.

The following lines occur in an early Commonplace-book of the poet's, and probably relate to the consequences of his first serious error: –

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison, the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
But when, to all the evil of misfortune,
This sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self,'
Or, worser far, the pangs of keen remorse—
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt perhaps where we've involved others,
The young, the innocent, who fondly lo'ed us,
Nay, more—that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There 's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonising throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
Oh, happy, happy, enviable man!
Oh, glorious magnanimity of soul!

---

[1] Cough. [2] A contemptuous term. [3] Abundance

ANSWER TO A POETICAL EPISTLE,

SENT TO THE AUTHOR BY A TAILOR.

A tailor in the neighbourhood of Mauchline having taken it upon him to send the poet a rhymed homily on his loose conversation and irregular behaviour, received the following lines in reply to his lecture:—

WHAT ails ye now, ye lousie bitch,
To thrash my back at sic a pitch?
Losh, man! hae mercy wi' your natch,[1]
Your bodkin's bauld,
I didna suffer half sae much
Frae Daddie Auld.

What though at times, when I grow crouse,[2]
I gie the dames a random pouse,
Is that enough for you to souse[3]
Your servant sae?
Gae mind your seam, ye prick-the-louse
And jag-the-flae.

King David, o' poetic brief,
Wrought 'mang the lasses sic mischief
As fill'd his after life wi' grief
And bluidy rants,
And yet he 's rank'd among the chief
O' lang-syne saunts.

And maybe, Tam, for a' my cants,[4]
My wicked rhymes, and drucken rants,
I'll gie auld cloven Clootie's haunts
An unco slip yet,
And snugly sit among the saunts
At Davie's hip yet.

But fegs,[5] the session says I maun
Gae fa' upon anither plan,
Than garrin' lasses cowp the cran
Clean heels owre gowdy,
And sairly thole[6] their mither's ban
Afore the howdy.[7]

This leads me on, to tell for sport,
How I did wi' the session sort:
Auld Clinkum at the inner port
Cried three times—"Robin!
Come hither, lad, and answer for't,
Ye 're blamed for jobbin'."

---

[1] Grip. [2] Happy. [3] Scold. [4] Tricks.
[5] Faith. [6] Bear. [7] Midwife.

Wi' pinch I put a Sunday's face on,
And snooved[1] awa' before the session;
I made an open, fair confession—
I scorn'd to lie;
And syne Mess John, beyond expression,
Fell foul o' me.

A furnicator-loon he call'd me,
And said my faut frae bliss expell'd me;
I own'd the tale was true he tell'd me,
"But what the matter?"
Quo' I, "I fear unless ye geld me,
I'll ne'er be better."

"Geld you!" quo' he, "and what for no?
If that your right hand, leg, or toe,
Should ever prove your spiritual foe,
You should remember
To cut it aff—and what for no
Your dearest member?"

"Na, na," quo' I, "I'm no for that,
Gelding's nae better than 'tis ca't;
I'd rather suffer for my faut,
A hearty flewit,
As sair owre hip as ye can draw't,
Though I should rue it.

"Or gin ye like to end the bother,
To please us a', I've just ae ither—
When next wi' yon lass I forgather,
Whate'er betide it,
I'll frankly gie her't a' thegither,
And let her guide it."

But, sir, this pleased them warst ava,
And therefore, Tam, when that I saw,
I said, "Guid night," and cam awa',
And left the session;
I saw they were resolvèd a'
On my oppression.

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER

TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

For an account of the circumstances which gave rise to the following lines, see the introduction to the poem entitled "Scotch Drink," p. 63.

"Dearest of distillations! last and best!
How art thou lost!"—*Parody on Milton*

---

[1] Sneaked.

Ye Irish lords, ye knights and squires,
Wha represent our brughs and shires,
And doucely[1] manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Bardie's prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roopit * Muse is hearse![2]
Your honours' heart wi' grief 'twad pierce,
To see her sittin' on her a—e
Low i' the dust,
And scraichin'[3] † out prosaic verse,
And like to burst!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland and me 's in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On aqua vitæ;
And rouse them up to strong conviction,
And move their pity.

Stand forth and tell yon Premier youth,‡
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine and Scotland's drouth,[4]
His servants humble:
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man glunch[5] and gloom?
Speak out, and never fash your thoom![6]
Let posts and pensions sink or soom[7]
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'rin' votes you werena slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug,[8] and fidge[9] your back,
And hum and haw;
But raise your arm, and tell your crack[10]
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland greetin'[11] owre her thrissle,
Her mutchkin stoup as toom 's[12] a whissle;

---

[1] Soberly. [2] Hoarse.
[3] Screaming hoarsely—the cry of fowls when displeased. [4] Thirst.
[5] Frown. [6] Trouble your thumb. [7] Swim. [8] Ear.
[9] Shrug. [10] Tale. [11] Weeping. [12] Empty.

* A person with a sore throat and a dry, tickling cough, is said to be roopy.

† Some editors give this 'screechin', (screaming:) but, taken in connexion with the hoarseness, every one who has heard the word used will endorse our reading.

‡ William Pitt.

And damn'd excisemen in a bussle,
Seezin' a stell,
Triumphant crushin' 't like a mussle
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard smuggler, right behint her,
And cheek-for-chow a chuffie[1] vintner,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's-bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld mither's pot
Thus dung in staves,
And plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trod i' the mire and out o' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries fight,*
Or gab like Boswell,†
There 's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
And tie some hose well.

God bless your honours, can ye see 't,
The kind, auld, cantie carlin greet,[2]
And no get warmly to your feet,
And gar them hear it,
And tell them wi' a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it?

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period and pause,
And wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To make harangues;
Then echo through St Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster,‡ a true-blue Scot I 'se warran';
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste Kilkerran;§
And that glib-gabbet[3] Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham;‖

---

[1] Fat-faced. [2] The cheerful old wife cry. (Scotland is personified.) [3] Ready-tongued.

* Colonel Hugh Montgomery, who had served in the American war, and was then representing Ayrshire.

† James Boswell of Auchinleck, the biographer of Dr Samuel Johnson

‡ George Dempster of Dunnichen, Forfarshire.

§ Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran, then member for Edinburgh.

‖ The Marquis of Graham.

And ane, a chap that 's damn'd auldfarran,[1]
Dundas his name.*

Erskine,† a spunkie[2] Norland billie;
True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay;‡
And Livingstone, the bauld Sir Willie;
And mony ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

Thee, Sodger Hugh, my watchman stented,§
If bardies e'er are represented;
I ken if that your sword were wanted,
Ye 'd lend your hand:
But when there 's ought to say anent it,
Ye 're at a stand.‖

Arouse, my boys; exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her kettle;
Or, faith! I 'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,[3]
Ye 'll see 't or lang,
She 'll teach you, wi' a reekin' whittle,[4]
Anither sang.

This while she 's been in crankous[5] mood,
Her lost militia fired her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do good,
Play'd her that pliskie![6]
And now she 's like to rin red-wud[7]
About her whisky.

And, Lord, if ance they pit her till 't,
Her tartan petticoat she 'll kilt,
And durk and pistol at her belt,
She 'll tak the streets,
And rin her whittle to the hilt
I' th' first she meets!

For God's sake, sirs, then speak her fair,
And straik[8] her cannie wi' the hair,
And to the muckle House repair
Wi' instant speed,
And strive, wi' a' your wit and lear,
To get remead.

---

[1] Sagacious. [2] Plucky. [3] Plough-staff. [4] Knife.
[5] Ill tempered, restless. [6] Trick. [7] Mad. [8] Stroke

* Henry Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville.
† Thomas Erskine, afterwards Lord Erskine.
‡ Lord Frederick Campbell, brother to the Duke of Argyle, and Ilay Campbell, then Lord Advocate.
§ Being member for Ayrshire, the poet speaks of him as his stented or var. guard watchman.
‖ This stanza alludes to Hugh Montgomery's imperfect elocution

Yon ill-tongued tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers and mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cowe the caddie![1]
And send him to his dicing-box
And sportin' lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld Boconnock's*
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bannocks,†
And drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's‡
Nine times a week,
If he some scheme, like tea and winnocks,§
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He needna fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie, queer hotch-potch,
The coalition.‖

Auld Scotland has a raucle[2] tongue;
She 's just a devil wi' a rung;[3]

---

[1] Fellow. [2] Rough. [3] Cudgel

* William Pitt was the grandson of Robert Pitt of Boconnock, in Cornwall

† Cakes made of oats, beans, and peas, with a mixture of wheat or barley flour.

‡ A worthy old hostess of the author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studied politics over a glass of guid auld Scotch drink.—*B* "Nanse Tinnock is long deceased, and no one has caught up her mantle. She is described as having been a true *ale-wife*, in the proverbial sense of the word—close, discreet, civil, and no tale-teller. When any neighbouring wife came, asking if *her John* was here, 'Oh no,' Nanse would reply, shaking money in her pocket as she spoke, 'he's no here,' implying to the querist that the husband was not in the house, while she meant to herself that he was not among her half-pence—thus keeping the word of promise to the ear, but breaking it to the hope. Her house was one of two stories, and had a front towards the street, by which Burns must have entered Mauchline from Mossgiel. The date over the door is 1744. It is remembered, however, that Nanse never could understand how the poet should have talked of enjoying himself in her house 'nine times a-week.' 'The *lad*,' she said, 'hardly ever drank three half-mutchkins under her roof in his life. Nanse, probably, had never heard of the *poetical* licence. In truth, Nanse's hostelry was not the only one in Mauchline which Burns resorted to: a rather better-looking house, at the opening of the Cowgate, kept by a person named John Dove, and then and still bearing the arms of Sir John Whitefoord of Ballochmyle, was also a haunt of the poet's having this high recommendation, that its back windows surveyed those of the house in which his 'Jean' resided. The reader will find in its proper place a droll epitaph on John Dove, in which the honest landlord's religion is made out to be a mere comparative appreciation of his various liquors."—CHAMBERS.

§ Pitt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had gained some credit by a measure introduced in 1784 for preventing smuggling of tea by reducing the duty, the revenue being compensated by a tax on windows.

‖ Mixtie maxtie is Scotch for a mixture of incongruous elements. Hotch-potch is a dish composed of all sorts of vegetables This coalition, like many others since, was in the poet's eyes an unnatural banding together of men of different opinions.

And if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Though by the neck she should be strung,
She 'll no desert.

And now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,*
May still your mother's heart support ye;
Then though a minister grow dorty,[1]
And kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor and hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your honours a' your days
Wi' sowps[2] o' kail and brats o' claise,[3]
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes[4]
That haunt St Jamie's!
Your humble poet sings and prays
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starved slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blithe and frisky,
She eyes her free-born, martial boys,
Tak aff their whisky.

What though their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves
Or, hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burthen on their shouther;
They downa bide[5] the stink o' pouther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither[6]
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they 're aff, a' throu'ther,[7]
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotsman fra his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal George's will,
And there's the foe;
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

---

[1] Sulky. [2] Spoonfuls. [3] Rags o' clothes. [4] Jackdaws
[5] They dare not stand. [6] Uncertainty. [7] Pell mell.

* The number of Scotch representatives

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes—wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy han' a welcome gies him;
And when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him;
In faint huzzas!

Sages their solemn een may steek,[1]
And raise a philosophic reek,[2]
And physically causes seek,
In clime and season;
But tell me whisky's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
Though whiles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine[3] your dam;
Freedom and whisky gang thegither!—
Tak aff your dram!

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

Most editors have alluded to the tenderness of Burns towards the lower animals; this is a true poetic instinct, and with him was unusually strong. The Ettrick Shepherd says, in a note to this poem:—"Burns must have been an exceedingly good and kind-hearted being; for whenever he has occasion to address or mention any subordinate being, however mean, even a mouse or a flower, then there is a gentle pathos in his language that awakens the finest feelings of the heart."

A GUID New-Year I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a rip[4] to thy auld baggie:
Though thou's howe-backit now and knaggie,[5]
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gaen like ony staggie
Out-owre the lay.[6]

Though now thou's dowie,[7] stiff, and crazy,
And thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, and glazie,[8]
A bonny gray:
He should been tight that daur't to raize[9] thee,
Ance in a day.

---

1 Eyes may shut.
2 Smoke.
3 Lose.
4 A handful of corn in the stalk.
5 Bent-backed and ridged.
6 Grass-field.
7 Low-spirited.
8 Shining.
9 Excite.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A filly buirdly, steeve, and swank,[1]
And set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread yird;[2]
And could hae flown out-owre a stank,[3]
Like ony bird.

It's now some nine-and-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid father's meer:
He gied me thee, o' tocher[4] clear,
And fifty mark,
Though it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
And thou was stark.[5]

When first I gaed to woo my Jenny,
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:[6]
Though ye was trickie, slee, and funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie;[7]
But hamely, towie, quiet, and cannie,[8]
And unco sonsie.[9]

That day ye pranced wi' muckle pride
When ye bure hame my bonny bride:
And sweet and gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart* I could hae braggèd[10] wide,
For sic a pair.

Though now ye dow but hoyte and hoble,[11]
And wintle like a saumont-coble,[12]
That day ye was a jinker[13] noble,
For heels and win'!
And ran them till they a' did wauble,[14]
Far, far, behin'!

When thou and I were young and skeigh,[15]
And stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,[16]
How thou would prance, and snore and skreigh,
And tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, and stood abeigh,[17]
And ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, and I was mellow,
We took the road aye like a swallow:
At Brooses[18] thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith and speed;
But every tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

---

1 Stately, strong, active. 2 Earth. 3 Ditch. 4 Dowry.
5 Strong. 6 Mother. 7 Mischievous. 8 Good-natured
9 Engaging. 10 Challenged. 11 Can but limp and totter.
12 Twist like the ungainly boat used by salmon fishers. 13 Runner.
14 Stagger—being done-up. 15 Mettlesome. 16 Lengthy.
17 Aside 18 Wedding race.

* The district between the Ayr and the Doon

The sma' droop-rumpl't,[1] hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;[2]
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
And gar't them whaizle[3]
Nae whup nor spur, but just a wattle[4]
O' saugh or hazle.

Thou was a noble fittie-lan',[5]
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn!
Aft thee and I, in aught hours' gaun,
In guid March weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, and fech't, and fliskit,[6]
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,[7]
And spread abreed thy well-fill'd brisket,[8]
Wi' pith and power,
'Till spritty knowes wad rair't and risket,[9]
And slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, and snaws were deep,
And threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy cog[10] a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer;
I kenn'd my Maggie wadna sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;[11]
The steyest[12] brae thou wad hae faced it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit,[13]
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,[14]
Thou snoov't awa.

My pleugh is now thy bairn-time a';[15]
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa',
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me threttteen pund and twa,
The vera warst.

Mony a sair darg[16] we twa hae wrought,
And wi' the weary warl' fought!

---

1 Sloping-backed. 2 Might perhaps have beaten thee for a short race.
3 Wheeze. 4 A switch.
5 The near horse of the hindmost pair in the plough.
6 Never pulled by fits or starts, or fretted. 7 Shaken. 8 Breast.
9 Till hard, dry hillocks would open with a cracking sound, the earth falling gently over. 10 Wooden measure.
11 Stopped. 12 Steepest.
13 Never leaped, reared, or started forward. 14 Quickened.
15 My plough team are all thy children. 16 Day's labour.

And mony an anxious day I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we 're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou 's less deservin',
And thy auld days may end in starvin',
For my last fou,
A heapit stimpart,[1] I 'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We 've worn to crazy years thegither;
We 'll toyte[2] about wi' ane anither;
Wi' tentie care I 'll flit thy tether
To some hain'd rig,[3]
Whare ye may nobly rax[4] your leather.
Wi' sma' fatigue.

THE TWA DOGS.

A TALE.

Gilbert Burns says,—"The tale of 'The Twa Dogs' was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had a dog, which he called Luath, that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person, the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow on his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of 'Stanzas to the Memory of a Quadruped Friend:' but this plan was given up for the poem as it now stands. Cæsar was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite Luath." The factor who stood for his portrait here was the same of whom he writes to Dr Moore in 1787:—"My indignation yet boils at the scoundrel factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears." All who have been bred in country districts will have no difficulty in finding parallels to the factor of the poem. Often illiterate and unfeeling, they think to gain the favour of the laird by an over-zealous pressure on poor but honest tenants, who, if gently treated, would struggle through their difficulties

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' auld King Coil,[5]
Upon a bonny day in June,
When wearing through the afternoon,
Twa dogs that werena thrang[6] at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I 'll name, they ca'd him Cæsar,
Was keepit for his honour's pleasure;
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,[7]
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;

---

[1] A measure of corn, the eighth part of a bushel. [2] Totter.
[3] Saved ridge of grass. [4] Stretch. [5] The middle district of Ayrshire.
Busy. [7] Ears.

But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient[1] a pride—nae pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Even wi' a tinkler-gypsy's messan:[2]
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted[3] tyke, though e'er sae duddie,[4]
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't[5] on stanes and hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, roving billie,
Wha for his friend and comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,*
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash[6] and faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh[7] or dike.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,[8]
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his touzie[9] back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gaucie[10] tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies[11] wi' a swirl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,[12]
And unco pack and thick[13] thegither;
Wi' social nose whyles snuff'd and snowkit,[14]
Whyles mice and moudieworts they howkit;[15]
Whyles scour'd awa' in lang excursion,
And worried ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin'[16] weary grown,
Upon a knowe[17] they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression
About the lords o' the creation.

CÆSAR.

I've often wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
And when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies lived ava.

1 A petty oath = "the devil a bit o'." 2 Cur. 3 Matted and dirty.
4 Ragged. 5 Pissed. 6 Knowing. 7 Di ch.
8 His honest, comely, white-striped face. 9 Shaggy.
10 Bushy. 11 Hips. 12 Fond of each other.
13 Very interested and friendly. 14 Scented.
15 Sometimes for mice and moles they dug. 16 Sporting. 17 Hillock

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's "Fingal."—*B*

Our laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents;[1]
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonny silken purse
As lang 's my tail, whare, through the steeks,[2]
The yellow-letter'd Geordie keeks.[3]

Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
And though the gentry first are stechin,[4]
Yet e'en the ha' folk fill their pechan[5]
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and siclike trashtrie,
That 's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our whipper-in, wee, blastit wonner,[6]
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner
Better than ony tenant man
His honour has in a' the lan';
And what poor cot-folk pit their painch[7] in,
I own it 's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fasht[8] eneugh;
A cotter howkin' in a sheugh,[9]
Wi' dirty stanes biggin' a dike,
Baring a quarry, and siclike;
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,[10]
And nought but his han' darg[11] to keep
Them right and tight in thack and rape.[12]

And when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
And they maun starve o' cauld and hunger:
But how it comes I never kenn'd yet,
They 're maistly wonderfu' contented:
And buirdly chiels, and clever hizzies,[13]
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
Lord, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, and sic cattle;

---

1 His corn rents and assessments.
2 Stitches.
3 Glances.
4 Stuffing.
5 Stomach.
6 Wonder, a contemptuous appellation.
7 Paunch.
8 Troubled.
9 Digging in a ditch.
10 A number of ragged children.
11 Day's work.
12 Under a roof-tree—literally, thatch and rope.
13 Stalwart men and clever women.

They gang as saucy by poor folk
As I wad by a stinkin' brock.[1]
I've noticed, on our laird's court-day,
And mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash:[2]
He'll stamp and threaten, curse and swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
And hear it a', and fear and tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches!

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched 's ane wad think;
Though constantly on poortith's[3] brink:
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't gies them little fright.

Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
They 're aye in less or mair provided;
And though fatigued wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie[4] weans and faithfu' wives;
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side;
And whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy[5]
Can mak the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They 'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts;
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
And ferlie[6] at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-faced Hallowmas returns,
They get the jovial ranting kirns,[7]
When rural life o' every station
Unite in common recreation;
Love blinks, Wit slaps, and social Mirth
Forgets there 's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins
They bar the door on frosty win's;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspiring steam;

[1] Badger. [2] Bear a factor's abuse. [3] Poverty. [4] Thriving
[5] Ale or whisky. [6] Wonder. [7] Harvest-homes

The luntin pipe and sneeshin mill[1]
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The cantie[2] auld folks crackin' crouse,[3]
The young anes rantin' through the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it 's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre aften play'd.
There 's mony a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont[4] folk,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favour wi' some gentle master,
Wha aiblins[5] thrang a parliamentin'
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it;
For Britain's guid! guid faith, I doubt it.
Say rather, gaun as Premiers lead him;
And saying Ay or No 's they bid him:
At operas and plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or maybe, in a frolic daft,
To Hague or Calais taks a waft,[6]
To mak a tour, and tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton*, and see the worl'.

There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He rives his father's auld entails;[7]
Or by Madrid he takes the route,
To thrum guitars, and fecht wi' nowte;[8]
Or down Italian vista startles,
Whore-hunting among groves o' myrtles,
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel look fair and fatter,
And clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, and faction!

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten and harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!

---

1 The smoking pipe and snuff-box.
2 Cheerful.
3 Talking briskly.
4 Seemly.
5 Perhaps.
6 A trip.
7 Breaks the entail on his estate.
8 See bull-fights.

The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' through the house—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

—*The Twa Dogs, page* 83

Oh, would they stay aback fra courts,
And please themsels wi' country sports,
It wad for every ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, and the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' o' a hare or moorcock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure?
Nae cauld nor hunger e'er can steer them,
The very thought o't needna fear them.

CÆSAR.

Lord, man, were ye but whyles whare I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.
It's true they needna starve nor sweat,
Through winter's cauld, or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
And fill auld age wi' grips and granes:[1]
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
And aye the less they hae to sturt[2] them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.

A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzens done, she's unco weel:
But Gentlemen, and Ladies warst,
Wi' evendown want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, and lazy;
Though deil haet[3] ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, and tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, and restless;
And e'en their sports, their balls and races,
Their galloping through public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp and art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart,

The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther[4] a' in deep debauches;
Ae night they're mad wi' drink and whoring,
Neist day their life is past enduring.

[1] Pains and groans. [2] Trouble. [3] Devil a thing. [4] Solder.

The Ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They 're a' run deils and jads[1] thegither.
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup and platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty:
Or lee-lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks,
Pore owre the devil's pictured beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
And cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.
There's some exception, man and woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this, the sun was out o' sight,
And darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock[2] humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin i' the loan.
When up they gat, and shook their lugs,
Rejoiced they werena men, but dogs;
And each took aff his several way,
Resolved to meet some ither day.

TO A LOUSE,

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

Burns's fastidious patrons and patroresses sometimes ventured to lecture him on the homeliness and vulgarity of some of his themes. "The Address to a Louse" was a notable instance. The poet defended it on account of the moral conveyed, and he was right we think. He was ever impatient of criticism and suggestions: and, judging from the kind of criticisms and suggestions frequently offered to him, we may be glad that he so frequently followed his own judgment.

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin' ferlie![3]
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye strunt[4] rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Though, faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd, by saunt and sinner,
How dare ye set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady?
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle;[5]
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle[6]

---

1 A giddy girl. 2 Beetle. 3 Wonder. 4 Strut
5 Swift crawl in some beggar's hair. 6 Scramble.

Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare horn nor bane ne'er daur unsettle[1]
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye 're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils,[2] snug and tight;
Na, faith ye yet! ye 'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The very tapmost, towering height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and gray as ony grozet:[3]
Oh for some rank, mercurial rozet,[4]
Or fell, red smeddum,[5]
I'd gie you sic a hearty doze o't,
Wad dress your droddum![6]

I wadna been surprised to spy
You on an auld wife's flannen toy:[7]
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;[8]
But Miss's fine Lunardi! * fie!
How daur ye do't?

O Jenny, dinna toss your head,
And set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursèd speed
The blastie's makin'!
Thae winks and finger-ends, I dread,
Are notice takin'!

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us,
And even devotion!

THE ORDINATION.

'The Ordination" was written on the occasion of the admission of the Rev. James Mackinlay as one of the ministers of the Laigh or parochial kirk of Kilmarnock. Mackinlay was a member of the "Auld-Licht" or orthodox school, to which the poet was opposed. The following by Mr Chambers will show how small a hold the moderate or liberal party had on the sympathies of

---

[1] Where the hair is never combed. [2] The ribbon-ends. [3] Gooseberry.
[4] Rosin. [5] Powder. [6] Breech. [7] Flannel cap.
[8] Flannel waistcoat.

* A kind of bonnet, at one time fashionable, called after an Italian aeronaut.

the bulk of the people:—"There was a popular notion that Mr Lindsay had been indebted for his presentation from the patron, Lord Glencairn, to his wife, Margaret Lauder, who was believed, but, I am assured erroneously, to have been his lordship's housekeeper. Mr Lindsay's induction, in 1764, was so much in opposition to the sentiments of the people, that it produced a riot, attended by many outrages. Three young men who had distinguished themselves by their violence, were whipped through Ayr, and imprisoned a month. These circumstances evoked from a shoemaker named Hunter, a scoffing ballad, to which Burns alludes in the note marked thus ‡, below, and which may be found in the 'History of Kilmarnock,' by Archibald M'Kay: 1848." A third edition of Mr M'Kay's very interesting work was published recently; and the account of Mr Lindsay's induction and "The Scoffing Ballad," will be found at pp. 119-128.

"For sense they little owe to frugal Heaven—
To please the mob, they hide the little given."

KILMARNOCK wabsters,[1] fidge and claw,
And pour your creeshie nations;[2]
And ye wha leather rax[3] and draw,
Of a' denominations,*
Swith to the Laigh Kirk, ane and a',
And there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's† in a raw,
And pour divine libations
For joy this day.

Curst Common Sense, that imp o' hell,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;‡
But Oliphant aft made her yell,
And Russell sair misca'd her;§
This day Mackinlay taks the flail,
And he 's the boy will blaud[4] her!
He 'll clap a shangan[5] on her tail,
And set the bairns to daud[6] her
Wi' dirt this day.

Mak haste and turn king David owre,
And lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
And skirl up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,[7]
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For Heresy is in her power,
And gloriously she 'll whang[8] her
Wi' pith this day.

---

1 Weavers. 2 Greasy crowds. 3 Stretch. 4 Slap.
5 A cleft stick. 6 Bespatter. 7 A dust. 8 Lash.

* Kilmarnock was then a town of between three and four thousand inhabitants, most of whom were engaged in the manufacture of carpets and other coarse woollen goods, or in the preparation of leather.

† A tavern near the church kept by a person of this name.

‡ Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr Lindsay to the Laigh Kirk.—*B.*

§ Oliphant and Russell were ministers of the Auld-Licht party.

Come, let a proper text be read,
And touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless Ham * leugh at his dad,
Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phinehas † drove the murdering blade,
Wi' whore-abhorring rigour;
Or Zipporah,‡ the scauldin' jade,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' the inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
And bind him down wi' caution,
That stipend is a carnal weed
He taks but for the fashion;
And gie him owre the flock to feed,
And punish each transgression;
Especial, rams that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin',
Spare them nae day.

Now, auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
And toss thy horns fu' canty;[1]
Nae mair thou 'lt rowte[2] out-owre the dale,
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' gospel kail
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
And runts[3] o' grace the pick and wale,
No gien by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

Nae mair by Babel's streams we 'll weep,
To think upon our Zion;
And hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin';
Come, screw the pegs, wi' tunefu' cheep,
And o'er the thairms[4] be tryin';
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,[5]
And a' like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day!

Lang, Patronage, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shored[6] the Kirk's undoin',
As lately Fenwick,§ sair forfairn,[7]
Has proven to its ruin:
Our patron, honest man! Glencairn,
He saw mischief was brewin';
And, like a godly elect bairn,
He 's waled[8] us out a true ane,
And sound this day.

---

1 Merry. 2 Low. 3 Cabbage stems. 4 Strings.
5 Elbows jerk. 6 Threatened. 7 Menaced. 8 Chosen.

* Genesis ix. 22. † Numbers xxv. 8. ‡ Exodus iv. 25.
§ Rev. William Boyd, minister of Fenwick, whose settlement had been disputed

Now, Robinson,* harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab[1] for ever:
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they 'll think you clever!
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton† repair,
And turn a carpet-weaver
Aff-hand this day.

Mutrie‡ and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones:
Auld Hornie did the Laigh Kirk watch,
Just like a winkin' baudrons:[2]
And aye he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes
She 's swingein'[3] through the city;
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow its unco pretty:
There, Learning, with his Greekish face
Grunts out some Latin ditty;
And Common Sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to Jamie Beattie§
Her plaint this day.

But there 's Morality himsel,
Embracing all opinions;
Hear how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions;
See how she peels the skin and fell,[4]
As ane were peelin' onions!
Now there—they 're packèd aff to hell,
And banish'd our dominions
Henceforth this day.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys,
That Heresy can torture,

---

[1] Shut your mouth. [2] A cat. [3] Whipping. [4] The flesh under the skin.

* The colleague of the newly-ordained clergyman—a moderate.
† A part of the town of Kilmarnock.
‡ The deceased clergyman, whom Mr Mackinlay succeeded
§ The well-known author of the "Essay on Truth."

They 'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,[1]
And cowe[2] her measure shorter
By the head some day.

Come, bring the tither mutchkin in,
And here 's, for a conclusion,
To every New-Light* mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion:
If mair they deave[3] us wi' their din,
Or patronage intrusion,
We 'll light a spunk,[4] and, every skin,
We 'll rin them aff in fusion,
Like oil some day.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID, OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

This fine poem is a protest against a too ready judging of one's neighbour, and was no doubt suggested by the worrying attacks of petty minds who were incapable of going below the surface, or of understanding his many-sided character. The Ettrick Shepherd, in speaking of it, says, "Burns has written more from his own heart and his own feelings than any other poet, of which this poem is an instance. With the secret fountains of passion in the human soul he was well acquainted, and deeply versed in their mysteries. The last two verses are above all praise."

"My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither:
The rigid righteous is a fool,
The rigid wise anither;
The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' daffin."—SOLOMON.—Eccles. vii. 16.

O YE wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye 've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,
Supplied wi' store o' water,
The heapet happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,

---

[1] A swing in a rope. [2] Cut. [3] Deafen. [4] A match.

* "New Light" is a cant phrase, in the west of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.—*B*

That frequent pass douce[1] Wisdom's door
For glaikit[2] Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie[3] tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
And shudder at the niffer,[4]
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It makes an unco lee-way.

See social life and glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmugrified,[5] they 're grown
Debauchery and drinking:
Oh would they stay to calculate
The eternal consequences:
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor frailty names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-loved lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,[6]
Ye 're aiblins[7] nae temptation.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin'[8] wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

1 Thoughtful. 2 Senseless. 3 Unlucky. 4 Comparison.
5 Transformed. 6 Ear. 7 Perhaps. 8 A little bit.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias:
Then at the balance let 's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What 's done we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted.

THE INVENTORY.

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF TAXES.

Mr Chambers says:—"The 'Inventory' was written in answer to a mandate sent by Mr Aiken of Ayr, the surveyor of windows, carriages, &c., for the district, to each farmer, ordering him to send a signed list of his horses, servants wheel-carriages, &c. and to state whether he was a married man or a bachelor and also the number of his children. The poem is chiefly remarkable for the information it gives concerning the farm, the household, and the habits of Burns."

SIR, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list
O' guids and gear, and a' my graith,
To which I 'm clear to gie my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew afore a pettle.[1]
My han'-afore's[2] a guid auld *has-been*,
And wight and wilfu' a' his days been.
My han'-ahin's[3] a weel-gaun filly,
That aft has borne me hame frae Killie,*
And your auld burro' mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime—
But ance, when in my wooing pride,
I, like a blockhead boost[4] to ride,
The wilfu' creature sae I pat to,
(Lord, pardon a' my sins, and that too!)
I play'd my filly sic a shavie,[5]
She 's a' bedevil'd wi' the spavie.
My fur-ahin's[6] a worthy beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was traced.
The fourth 's a Highland Donald hastie,
A damn'd red-wud Kilburnie blastie!
Forbye a cowte,[7] o' cowte's the wale,[8]
As ever ran afore a tail:

---

1 A plough spade. 2 The foremost horse on the left-hand in the plough.
3 The hindmost horse on the left-hand in the plough. 4 Must needs.
5 A trick. 6 The hindmost horse on the right-hand in the plough
7 A colt, 8 Choice

* Kilmarnock

If he be spared to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pun' at least.

Wheel-carriages I hae but few,
Three carts, and twa are feckly[1] new;
An auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
Ae leg and baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
And my auld mither brunt the trin'le.

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run-deils for rantin' and for noise;
A gaudsman ane, a thrasher t'other;
Wee Davoc hauds the nowte in fother.[2]
I rule them, as I ought, discreetly,
And aften labour them completely;
And aye on Sundays duly, nightly,
I on the question targe[3] them tightly,
Till, faith, wee Davoc's turn'd sae gleg,[4]
Though scarcely langer than my leg,
He'll screed you aff Effectual Calling*
As fast as ony in the dwalling.

I've nane in female servan' station,
(Lord, keep me aye frae a' temptation!)
I hae nae wife, and that my bliss is,
And ye hae laid nae tax on misses;
And then, if kirk folks dinna clutch me,
I ken the devils darena touch me.
Wi' weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heaven sent me ane mair than I wanted.
My sonsie,[5] smirking, dear-bought Bess,†
She stares the daddy in her face,
Enough of ought you like but grace;
But her, my bonny sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already,
And gin ye tax her or her mither,
B' the Lord! ye'se get them a' thegither.

And now, remember, Mr Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I 'm takin';
Frae this time forth I do declare,
I'se ne'er ride horse nor hizzie mair;
Through dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,[6]
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;
My travel a' on foot I'll shank[7] it,
I've sturdy bearers, Gude be thankit.

---

1 Nearly. 2 Keeps the cattle in fodder. 3 Task. 4 So sharp.
5 Comely. 6 Tramp. 7 Walk.

* A leading question in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of divines.

† A child born to the poet by a female servant of his mother's.

The kirk and you may tak you that,
It puts but little in your pat:
Sae dinna put me in your buke,
Nor for my ten white shillings luke.

This list wi' my ain hand I've wrote it,
The day and date as under noted;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic, ROBERT BURNS.
MOSSGIEL, *February* 22, 1786.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL 1786.

Mr Chambers says:—"The 'Mountain Daisy' was composed, as the poet has related, at the plough. The field where he crushed the 'Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower' lies next to that in which he turned up the nest of the mouse, and both are on the farm of Mossgiel, and still shown to anxious inquirers by the neighbouring peasantry."

WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,
Thou 's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure[1]
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonny gem.

Alas! it 's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonny lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' speckled breast,
When upward springing, blithe, to greet,
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble, birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted[2] forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield[3]
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie[4] stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

---

1 Dust. 2 Peeped. 3 Shelter. 4 Barren.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the *share* uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven,
To misery's brink,
Till, wrench'd of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till, crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

After mentioning the appearance of "Holy Willie's Prayer," which alarmed the kirk-session so much that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers, Burns states:—"Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point-blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem 'The Lament.' This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the charter, and mistaken the reckoning of rationality. I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, 'The Gloomy Night is Gathering Fast,' when a letter from Dr Blacklock to a

friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition."

"It is scarcely necessary" Gilbert Burns says, "to mention that 'The Lament' was composed on that unfortunate passage in his matrimonial history which I have mentioned in my letter to Mrs Dunlop, [alluding to his connexion with Jean Armour.] After the first distraction of his feelings had subsided, that connexion *could no longer be concealed*. Robert durst not engage with a family in his poor unsettled state, but was anxious to shield his partner by every means in his power, from the consequences of their imprudence. It was agreed, therefore, between them, that they should make a legal acknowledgment of an irregular and private marriage; that he should go to Jamaica to *push his fortune*, and that she should remain with her father till it might please Providence to put the means of supporting a family in his power."

"Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe!"—HOME.

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep
Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How life and love are all a dream.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-markèd distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
Thou busy power, remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonising thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

No idly-feign'd poetic pains
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft-attested Powers above;
The promised father's tender name;
These were the pledges of my love!

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptured moments flown,
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and hers alone!
And must I think it!—is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost?

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!

Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie through rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
Her sorrows share, and make them less?

Ye wingèd hours that o'er us pass'd,
Enraptured more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasured thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Even every ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in soar affright:
Even day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

O thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse,
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observed us, fondly wandering, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual kindling eye.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes never, never, to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From every joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander through;
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

DESPONDENCY:

AN ODE.

A sorrow or a cross is half conquered when, by telling it, some dear friend becomes, as it were, a sharer in it. Burns poured out his troubles in verse with a like result. He says, "I think it is one of the greatest pleasures attending a poetic genius, that we can give our woes, cares, joys, and loves, an embodied form in verse, which to me is ever immediate ease."

OPPRESS'D with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I set me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim, backward, as I cast my view,
What sickening scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through,
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom:
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

Happy, ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Even when the wish'd end 's denied,
Yet while the busy means are plied,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an aim,
Meet every sad returning night
And joyless morn the same;
You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find every prospect vain.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his evening thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint collected dream;
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to Heaven on high,
As, wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit placed
Where never human footstep traced,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
With self-respecting art:
But, ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys
Which I too keenly taste,
The solitary can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here must cry here
At perfidy ingrate!

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchanged for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining age!

ODE TO RUIN.

Currie says:—"It appears from internal evidence that the above lines were composed in 1786, when 'Hungry Ruin had him in the wind.' The 'dart' that

'Cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart,'

is evidently an allusion to his separation from his 'bonny Jean.' Burns seems to have glanced into futurity with a prophetic eye: images of misery and woe darkened the distant vista: and when he looked back on his career he saw little to console him. 'I have been this morning,' he observes, 'taking a peep through, as Young finely says, "The dark postern of time long elapsed." 'Twas a rueful prospect! What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportion, in some parts! What unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of mercies and said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." I rose, eased and strengthened.'"

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word
The mightiest empires fall!

Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolved, despairing eye,
I see each aimèd dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
And quivers in my heart.
Then lowering and pouring,
The storm no more I dread;
Though thick'ning and black'ning,
Round my devoted head

And thou grim power, by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's prayer!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's joyless day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mouldering in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclaspèd, and graspèd
Within thy cold embrace!

ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY.

The history of this poem is as follows:—"On Tuesday, May 23, there was a meeting of the Highland Society at London for the encouragement of the fisheries in the Highlands, &c. Three thousand pounds were immediately subscribed by eleven gentlemen present for this particular purpose. The Earl of Breadalbane informed the meeting that five hundred persons had agreed to emigrate from the estates of Mr Macdonald of Glengarry: that they had subscribed money, purchased ships, &c., to carry their design into effect. The noblemen and gentlemen agreed to co-operate with Government to frustrate their design; and to recommend to the principal noblemen and gentlemen in the Highlands to endeavour to prevent emigration, by improving the fisheries, agriculture, and manufactures, and particularly to enter into a subscription for that purpose." This appeared in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of 30th May 1786. Remembering the outcry made a few years ago against Highland evictions, we cannot help being somewhat surprised at the poet's indignation. Mackenzie of Applecross, who figures in the poem, was a liberal landowner. Mr Knox, in his tour of the Highlands, written about the same time as the Address, states that he had relinquished all feudal claims upon the labour of his tenants, paying them for their labour. The Address first appeared in the *Scot's Magazine* with the following heading:—"To the Right Honourable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honourable and Honourable the Highland Society, which met on the 23d of May last, at the Shakespeare, Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of five hundred

Highlanders, who, as the Society were informed by Mr M—— of A——s, were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters, whose property they were, by emigrating from the lands of Mr Macdonald of Glengarry, to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing LIBERTY."

LONG life, my lord, and health be yours,
Unscaith'd by hunger'd Highland boors;[1]
Lord, grant nae duddie[2] desperate beggar,
Wi' dirk, claymore, or rusty trigger,
May twin auld Scotland o' a life
She likes—as lambkins like a knife.
Faith, you and A——s were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight;
I doubt na! they wad bid nae better
Then let them ance out owre the water;
Then up amang thae lakes and seas
They 'll mak what rules and laws they please,
Some daring Hancock, or a Franklin,
May set their Highland bluid a-ranklin';
Some Washington again may head them,
Or some Montgomery, fearless lead them,
Till God knows what may be effected
When by such heads and hearts directed—
Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
May to Patrician rights aspire!
Nae sage North, now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and premier o'er the pack vile,
And whare will ye get Howes and Clintons
To bring them to a right repentance,
To cowe the rebel generation,
And save the honour o' the nation?
They and be damn'd! what right hae they
To meat or sleep, or light o' day?
Far less to riches, power, or freedom,
But what your lordship likes to gie them?
But hear, my lord! Glengarry, hear!
Your hand 's owre light on them, I fear!
Your factors, grieves, trustees, and bailies,
I canna say but they do gaylies;[3]
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
And tirl the hallions to the birses;[4]
Yet while they 're only poind't and herriet,[5]
They 'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit;
But smash them! crash them a' to spails![6]
And rot the dyvors[7] i' the jails!
The young dogs, swinge[8] them to the labour;
Let wark and hunger mak them sober!
The hizzies, if they 're aughtlins fawsont,[9]
Let them in Drury Lane be lesson'd!

---

1 Clodhoppers. 2 Ragged. 3 Pretty well.
4 And strip the clowns to the skin. 5 Sold out and despoiled
6 Chips. 7 Bankrupts. 8 Whip.
9 The girls if they be at all handsome.

And if the wives and dirty brats
E'en thigger[1] at your doors and yetts,[2]
Flaffan wi' duds and gray wi' beas',[3]
Frightin' awa' your deucks and geese,
Get out a horsewhip or a jowler,[4]
The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
And gar[5] the tatter'd gypsies pack
Wi' a' their bastards on their back!
Go on, my lord! I lang to meet you,
And in my house at hame to greet you;
Wi' common lords ye shanna mingle,
The benmost neuk[6] beside the ingle,[7]
At my right han' assign'd your seat,
'Tween Herod's hip and Polycrate,—
Or if you on your station tarrow,[8]
Between Almagro and Pizarro,
A seat, I'm sure ye're weel deservin't;
And till ye come—Your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB.

June 1st, Anno Mundi, 5790 [A.D. 1786.]

A DREAM.

The publication of "The Dream" in the Edinburgh edition of the poems, according to many, did much to injure the poet with the dispensers of Government patronage. Mrs Dunlop and others endeavoured in vain to prevent its publication. The free-spoken and humorous verses of Burns contrast oddly with the servile ode of Warton, which Burns represents himself as having fallen asleep in reading.

"Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely dreams were ne'er indicted treason."

On reading in the public papers the Laureate's "Ode,"* with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep than he imagined himself transported to the birthday levee; and in his dreaming fancy made the following ADDRESS.—BURNS.

GUID-MORNIN' to your Majesty!
May Heaven augment your blisses,
On every new birthday ye see,
A humble poet wishes!

---

[1] Beg. [2] Gates. [3] Fluttering in rags and gray with vermin.
[4] A dog. [5] Make. [6] The innermost corner.
[7] Fire-place. [8] Complain.

* Thomas Warton then filled this office. His ode for June 4, 1786, begins as follows:—

"When Freedom nursed her native fire
In ancient Greece, and ruled the lyre,
Her bards disdainful, from the tyrant's brow,
The tinsel gifts of flattery tore,
But paid to guiltless power their willing vow,
And to the throne of virtuous kings," &c.

On these verses, the rhymes of the Ayrshire bard must be allowed to form an odd enough commentary.—CHAMBERS.

My bardship here, at your levee.
On sic a day as this is,
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Among thae birthday dresses
Sae fine this day.

I see ye 're complimented thrang,
By many a lord and lady;
"God save the king" 's a cuckoo sang
That 's unco easy said aye;
The poets, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd and ready,
Wad gar ye trow[1] ye ne'er do wrang,
But aye unerring steady,
On sic a day.

For me, before a monarch's face,
Even there I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So, nae reflection on your grace,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There 's mony waur[2] been o' the race,
And aiblins[3] ane been better
Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sovereign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,[4]
And downa[5] be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft and clouted,[6]
And now the third part of the string,
And less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.*

Far be 't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But, faith! I muckle doubt, my sire,
Ye 've trusted ministration
To chaps,[7] wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

And now ye 've gien auld Britain peace,
Her broken shins to plaister:

---

[1] Would make you believe. [2] Many worse. [3] Perhaps. [4] Beat
[5] Will not. [6] Broken and patched. [7] Fellows.

* In this verse the poet alludes to the immense curtailment of the British dominion at the close of the American war, and the cession of the territory of Louisiana to Spain.

Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester:
For me, thank God, my life 's a lease,
Nae bargain wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear that wi' the geese,
I shortly boost[1] to pasture
I' the craft some day.

I 'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
When taxes he enlarges,
(And Will's a true guid fallow's get,*
A name not envy spairges,)[2]
That he intends to pay your debt,
And lessen a' your charges;
But, God-sake! let nae saving fit
Abridge your bonny barges †
And boats this day.

Adieu, my liege! may Freedom geck[3]
Beneath your high protection;
And may you rax[4] Corruption's neck,
And gie her for dissection!
But since I 'm here, I 'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your queen, with due respect,
My fealty and subjection
This great birthday.

Hail, Majesty Most Excellent!
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gies ye?
Thae bonnie bairn-time,[5] Heaven has lent,
Still higher may they heeze[6] ye
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
I tell your Highness fairly,
Down pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I 'm tauld ye 're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
And curse your folly sairly,

---

1 Behoved. 2 Bespatters. 3 Lift her head.
4 Stretch. 5 Children. 6 Raise.

* Gait, gett, or gyte, a homely substitute for the word child in Scotland. The above stanza is not the only testimony of admiration which Burns pays to the great Earl of Chatham.

† On the supplies for the navy being voted, spring 1788, Captain Macbride counselled some changes in that force, particularly the giving up of 64-gun ships, which occasioned a good deal of discussion

That e'er ye brak Diana's pales,
Or rattled dice wi' Charlie.*
By night or day.

Yet aft a ragged cowte's[1] been known
To mak a noble aiver;[2]
So, ye may doucely[3] fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver;[4]
There, him at Agincourt † wha shone,
Few better were or braver:
And yet, wi funny, queer Sir John,‡
He was an unco shaver[5]
For mony a day.

For you, right reverend Osnaburg,§
Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter,
Although a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty[6] dog
That bears the keys o' Peter,
Then, swith! and get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth! ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

Young, royal Tarry Breeks, ‖ I learn,
Ye 've lately come athwart her;
A glorious galley,¶ stem and stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out, that she 'll discern,
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple-airn.
And, large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonny blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heaven mak you guid as weel as braw,
And gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer na British boys awa',
For kings are unco scant aye;[7]
And German gentles are but sma',
They 're better just than want aye
On ony day.

God bless you a'! consider now
Ye 're unco muckle dautit;[8]

---

[1] Colt. [2] Horse. [3] Wisely. [4] Idle scandal.
[5] A humorous wag. [6] Haughty. [7] Always scarce. [8] Too much flattered

* The Right Hon. Charles James Fox.
† King Henry V.—*B*
‡ Sir John Falstaff.—*vide* Shakespeare.—*B*.
§ The Duke of York.
‖ William IV., then Duke of Clarence.
¶ Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour

But ere the course o' life be through,
It may be bitter sautit:[1]
And I hae seen their coggie fu',[2]
That yet hae tarrow't[3] at it;
But or the day was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautit[4]
Fu' clean that day.

THE HOLY FAIR.*

This is by far the ablest of the satires Burns levelled at the Church; and his worst enemies could not avoid confessing that it was as well deserved as it was clever. Scenes such as the poet describes had become a scandal and a disgrace to the Church. The poem was met by a storm of abuse from his old enemies; but, amid all their railings, they did not fail to lay it to heart, and from that time forward there was a manifest improvement in the bearing of ministers and people on such occasions. This is not the least of its merits in the eyes of his countrymen of the present day. Notwithstanding the daring levity of some of its allusions and incidents, the poet has strictly confined himself to the sayings and doings of the assembled multitude—the sacred rite itself is never once mentioned.

Open-air sacramental services, conducted in the presence of huge mobs, are not uncommon, we believe, at the present day in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The writer of this has witnessed several such. Twenty years ago, he remembers being present at a huge gathering of the kind, the population of half a county being collected together, many having come a distance of more than twenty miles—some on foot, others on horseback, in gigs, and carts. During the early part of the day, decorum was pretty well maintained, but towards the afternoon the crowd kept moving backwards and forwards, as if at a country fair. Bands of lads and lasses, and douce, sober seniors, were more intent on gossip and enjoying the refreshments, which the great majority had brought with them in abundance, than in listening to the exhausted ministers. Round the outskirts of the great crowd, knots of people were squatted on the grass, gossiping freely about family and country matters, while "the luntin pipe" went from mouth to mouth, men and women smoking vigorously, and "the sneeshin' mill" passed from hand to hand. By the rural population, even when the services are conducted decorously in the church, the Sacramental Sabbath is looked forward to as a day when friends and acquaintances will meet who have seldom more than two or three such opportunities in a year. The audience is not confined to the parish in which the celebration takes place, many people attending the communion from a dozen neighbouring parishes. The preaching season, as it is sometimes termed, is a period of excitement to the preachers as well as the people, many of them relishing the opportunity the season gives of exercising their eloquence in a new scene. There was no drinking observable during the services; but in the evening the change-houses of the various villages throughout the district presented no very edifying spectacle.

"A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:

---

1 Salted. 2 Platter full. 3 Grumbled. 4 They have scraped out the dish

* Holy Fair is a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.—*B.*

A mask that like the gorget show'd,
Dye-varying on the pigeon:
And for a mantle, large and broad,
He wrapt him in Religion."—*Hypocrisy à-la-Mode.*

UPON a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walkèd forth to view the corn,
And snuff the caller[1] air.
The rising sun owre Galston* muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin';[2]
The hares were hirplin[3] down the furs,[4]
The lav'rocks they were chantin'
Fu' sweet that day.

As lightsomely I glower'd[5] abroad,
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies,[6] early at the road,
Cam skelpin' up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart[7] lining;
The third, that gaed a-wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining
Fu' gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, and claes;
Their visage, wither'd, lang, and thin,
And sour as ony slaes:
The third cam up, hap-step-and-lowp,
As light as ony lambie,
And wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I 'm sure I 've seen that bonny face,
But yet I canna name ye."
Quo' she, and laughin' as she spak,
And taks me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, hae gien the feck[8]
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

"My name is Fun—your crony dear,
The nearest friend ye hae;
And this is Superstition here,
And that 's Hypocrisy.

---

[1] Fresh. [2] Glancing. [3] Limping. [4] Furrows.
[5] Looked. [6] Wenches. [7] Gray. [8] Most.

* The adjoining parish to Mauchline.

I 'm gaun to Mauchline holy fair,
To spend an hour in daffin';[1]
Gin ye 'll go there, yon runkled pair,
We will get famous laughin',
At them this day."

Quoth I, "With a' my heart, I 'll do 't,
I 'll get my Sunday's sark[2] on,
And meet you on the holy spot;
Faith, we 'se hae fine remarkin'!"
Then I gaed hame at crowdie-time,[3]
And soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' mony a weary body,
In droves that day.

Here farmers gash,[4] in ridin' graith,[5]
Gaed hoddin'[6] by their cotters;
There, swankies[7] young, in braw braid claith,
Are springin' owre the gutters;
The lasses, skelpin' barefit, thrang,
In silks and scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in mony a whang,[8]
And farls,[9] baked wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

When by the plate we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glower Black-bonnet * throws,
And we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On every side they 're gath'rin',
Some carrying dails,[10] some chairs and stools,
And some are busy bleth'rin'[11]
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to fend the showers,
And screen our country gentry,
There Racer Jess,† and twa-three whores,
Are blinkin' at the entry.

---

1 Sport. 2 Shirt. 3 Breakfast-time. 4 Sensible.
5 Attire. 6 Jogging. 7 Striplings. 8 Cut.
9 Cakes. 10 Planks, or boards, to sit on. 11 Chatting.

* A colloquial appellation bestowed on the church elders or deacons, who in landward parishes in the olden time generally wore black bonnets on Sundays, when they officiated at "the plate" in making the usual collection for the poor.—MOTHERWELL.

† The following notice of Racer Jess appeared in the newspapers of February 1818:—"Died at Mauchline a few weeks since, Janet Gibson, consigned to immortality by Burns in his 'Holy Fair,' under the turf appellation of 'Racer Jess.' She was the daughter of 'Poosie Nansie,' who figures in 'The Jolly Beggars.' She was remarkable for her pedestrian powers, and sometimes ran long distances for a wager."

Here sits a raw of tittlin'[1] jades,
Wi' heaving breast and bare neck,
And there a batch o' wabster lads,
Blackguarding frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day.

Here, some are thinkin' on their sins,
And some upo' their claes;
Ane curses feet that fyled[2] his shins,
Anither sighs and prays:
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,[3]
Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

Oh, happy is that man and blest!
Nae wonder that it pride him!
Whase ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him!
Wi' arm reposed on the chair-back,
He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An 's loof[4] upon her bosom,
Unkenn'd that day.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation:
For Moodie * speels[5] the holy door,
Wi' tidings o' damnation.
Should Hornie, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The very sight o' Moodie's face
To 's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin' and wi' thumpin'!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He 's stampin' and he 's jumpin'!
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch[6] squeal, and gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day!

---

[1] Whispering. [2] Soiled. [3] Sample.
[4] Hand. [5] Climbs. [6] Unearthly.

* Moodie was the minister of Riccarton, and one of the heroes of "The Twa Herds." He was a never-failing assistant at the Mauchline sacraments. His personal appearance and style of oratory were exactly such as described by the poet. He dwelt chiefly on the terrors of the law. On one occasion, he told the audience that they would find the text in John viii. 44, but it was so applicable to their case that there was no need of his reading it to them. The verse begins, "Ye are of your father the devil."

But, hark! the tent has changed its voice!
There's peace and rest nae langer:
For a' the real judges rise,
They canna sit for anger.
Smith* opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals;
And aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars and barrels
A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine
Of moral powers and reason?
His English style, and gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like Socrates or Antonine,
Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum;
For Peebles, frae the Water-fit,†
Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the Word o' God,
And meek and mim[1] has view'd it,
While Common Sense‡ has ta'en the road,
And's aff and up the Cowgate,§
Fast, fast, that day.

Wee Miller‖ neist the guard relieves,
And orthodoxy raibles,[2]
Though in his heart he weel believes
And thinks it auld wives' fables:

---

[1] Primly. [2] Rattles.

* Mr (afterwards Dr) George Smith, minister of Galston—the same whom the poet introduces, in a different feeling, under the appellation of Irvine-side, in "The Kirk's Alarm." Burns meant on this occasion to compliment him on his rational mode of preaching, but the reverend divine regarded the stanza as satirical.

† The Rev. Mr (afterwards Dr) William Peebles, minister of Newton-upon-Ayr, sometimes named, from its situation, *the Water-fit* and the moving hand in the prosecution of Dr M'Gill, on which account he is introduced into "The Kirk's Alarm." He was in great favour at Ayr among the orthodox party, though much inferior in ability to the heterodox ministers of that ancient burgh.

‡ Dr Mackenzie, then of Mauchline, afterwards of Irvine, had recently conducted some village controversy under the title of "Common Sense." Some local commentators are of opinion that he, and not the personified abstraction, is meant.

§ A street so called which faces the tent in Mauchline.—*B* The same street in which Jean Armour lived.

‖ The Rev. Mr Miller, afterwards minister of Kilmaurs. He was of remarkably low stature, but enormous girth. Burns believed him at the time to lean at heart to the moderate party. This stanza, virtually the most depreciatory in the whole poem, is said to have retarded Miller's advancement.

But, faith! the birkie wants a manse,
So, cannily he hums them;
Although his carnal wit and sense
Like hafflins-ways[1] o'ercomes him
At times that day.

Now but and ben the change-house fills
Wi' yill-caup commentators:
Here 's crying out for bakes[2] and gills,
And there the pint-stoup clatters;
While thick and thrang, and loud and lang,
Wi' logic and wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that, in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs[3] us fou o' knowledge.
Be 't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle[4] up our notion
By night or day.

The lads and lasses, blithely bent,
To mind baith saul and body,
Sit round the table weel content,
And steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, and that ane's leuk,
They 're making observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,[5]
And forming assignations
To meet some day.

But now the Lord's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rarin',
And echoes back return the shouts,
Black Russell * is na sparin';
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
Divide the joints and marrow;
His talk o' hell, whare devils dwell;
Our vera sauls does harrow †
Wi' fright that day.

---

[1] Like hafflins-ways = almost.
[2] Biscuits.
[3] Crams.
[4] Rouse.
[5] Snug in the corner.

* The Rev. John Russell, at this time minister of the chapel of ease, Kilmarnock, afterwards minister of Stirling, one of the heroes of "The Twa Herds." "He was," says a correspondent of Cunningham's, "the most tremendous man I ever saw: Black Hugh Macpherson was a beauty in comparison. His voice was like thunder, and his sentiments were such as must have shocked any class of hearers in the least more refined than those whom he usually addressed."

† Shakespeare's "Hamlet."—*B.*

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
Fill'd fu' o' lowin' brunstane,
Whase ragin' flame, and scorchin' heat,
Wad melt the hardest whunstane!
The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
And think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear
'Twas but some neibor snorin'
Asleep that day.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell
How mony stories past,
And how they crowded to the yill
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs and caups,
Among the forms and benches:
And cheese and bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches,
And dauds[1] that day

In comes a gaucie,[2] gash[3] guidwife,
And sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck[4] and her knife;
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the grace,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
And gies them 't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

Waesucks![5] for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or melvie[6] his braw claithing!
O wives, be mindfu' ance yersel
How bonny lads ye wanted,
And dinna, for a kebbuck-heel,[7]
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

Now Clinkumbell, wi' rattlin' tow,
Begins to jow and croon;[8]
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,[9]
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps[10] the billies[11] halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith and hope, and love and drink,
They 're a' in famous tune
For crack that day.

---

1 Lumps. 2 Fat. 3 Sagacious. 4 Cheese.
5 Alas. 6 Soil. 7 Cheese-crust. 8 Sing and groan
9 Can. 10 Breaches in fences. 11 Lads.

How mony hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane,
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
And mony jobs that day begin
May end in houghmagandy
Some ither day.

VERSES ON A SCOTCH BARD,

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

The following playfully personal lines were written by the poet when he thought he was about to leave the country in 1786 for Jamaica:—

A' YE wha live by sowps o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,[1]
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come, mourn wi' me!
Our billie 's gien us a' a jink,[2]
And owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin' core,
Wha dearly like a random splore,[3]
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar
In social key;
For now he's taken anither shore,
And owre the sea!

The bonny lasses weel may wiss him,
And in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, and a' may bless him,
Wi' tearfu' ee;
For weel I wat[4] they 'll sairly miss him
That 's owre the sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou ta'en aff some drowsy bummle[5]
Wha can do nought but fyke and fumble,[6]
'Twad been nae plea;
But he was gleg[7] as ony wumble,[8]
That 's owre the sea!

Auld cantie Kyle may weepers wear,
And stain them wi' the saut, saut tear;

---

1 Versifying. 2 "Our friend has eluded us." 3 Frolic. 4 Well I know
5 Bungler. 6 "Make a fuss." 7 Sharp. 8 Wimble

'Twill make her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders[1] flee;
He was her laureate mony a year,
That 's owre the sea!

He saw misfortune's cauld nor'-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet[2] brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a berth afore the mast,
And owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,[3]
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,[4]
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So, row't his hurdies[5] in a hammock,
And owre the sea.

He ne'er was gien to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches[6] wadna bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was under hiding:
He dealt it free:
The Muse was a' that he took pride in
That 's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
And hap him in a cozie biel;[7]
Ye'll find him aye a dainty chiel,[8]
And fu' o' glee;
He wadna wrang the very deil,
That 's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing billie!
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie!
I 'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie[9]
Though owre the sea!

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Of this beautiful epitaph, which Burns wrote for himself, Wordsworth says,—"Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy!"

Is there a whim-inspirèd fool,
Owre fast for thought, owr hot for rule,

1 Shreds. 2 Jilt. 3 Rod. 4 Meal and water.
5 Wrapt his hams. 6 Pockets. 7 Warm shelter. 8 Kindly fellow.
9 My last gill.

Owre blate[1] to seek, owre proud to snool?[2]
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,[3]
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng?
Oh, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs himself life's mad career
Wild as the wave?
Here pause—and, through the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root.

A DEDICATION TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

In the following dedication of his poems to his friend, Gavin Hamilton, the poet does not merely confine himself to characterising that generous-natured man, but takes the opportunity of throwing out some parting sarcasms at orthodoxy and its partisans:—

EXPECT na, sir, in this narration,
A fleechin',[4] fleth'rin'[5] dedication,
To roose[6] you up, and ca you guid,
And sprung o' great and noble bluid,
Because ye're surnamed like his Grace;
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tired, and sae are ye,
Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

---

[1] Bashful. [2] Be obsequious. [3] Lamentation.
[4] Flattering [5] Fawning [6] Praise.

This may do—maun do, sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folks for a wamefu';[1]
For me! sae laigh[2] I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, I can plough;
And when I downa[3] yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, I can beg;
Sae I shall say, and that's nae flatterin',
Its just sic poet, and sic patron.

The poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear, some ill ane skelp[4] him,
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The patron, (sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me,)
On every hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want;
What's no his ain he winna tak it,
What ance he says he winna break it;
Ought he can lend he 'll no refus 't,
Till aft his guidness is abused;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Even that he doesna mind it lang:
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He doesna fail his part in either.

But then nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae godly symptom ye can ca' that;
It 's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor sinfu', corrupt nature:
Ye 'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he 's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
It 's no through terror of damnation;
It 's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
Vain is his hope whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;[5]
Abuse a brother to his back;

[1] Bellyful. [2] Low. [3] Cannot.
[4] Beat. [5] A coin—third part of a penn..

Steal through a winnock[1] frae a whore
But point the rake that taks the door;
Be to the poor like ony whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane,
Ply every art o' legal thieving;
No matter, stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces
Wi' weel-spread looves,[2] and lang, wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver—
A steady, sturdy, stanch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For gumlie[3] dubs of your ain delvin'!
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heaven commission gies him;
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deepening tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my Dedication;
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, sir, to you:
Because (ye needna tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronise them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever ——
I had amaist said, ever *pray*;
But that 's a word I needna say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o 't;
I 'm baith dead-sweer,[4] and wretched ill o 't;
But I'se repeat each poor man's prayer
That kens or hears about you, sir—

"May ne'er Misfortune's growling bark
Howl through the dwelling o' the Clerk!"*

[1] Window. [2] Palms of the hands. [3] Muddy. [4] Unwilling.

* A term applied to Mr Hamilton from his having acted in that capacity to some of the county courts

May ne'er his generous, honest heart,
For that same generous spirit smart;
May Kennedy's far-honour'd name
Lang beat his hymeneal flame,
Till Hamiltons, at least a dizen,
Are frae their nuptial labours risen
Five bonny lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows stout and able
To serve their king and country wee.
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the evening o' his days;
Till his wee curlie John's * ier-oe,[1]
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!

I will not wind a lang conclusion
Wi' complimentary effusion:
But whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest wi' Fortune's smiles and favours
I am, dear sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Powers above prevent!)
That iron-hearted carl, Want,
Attended in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your humble servant then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But by a poor man's hopes in Heaven!
While recollection's power is given,
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of Fortune's strife,
I, through the tender gushing tear,
Should recognise my master dear,
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother!

INVITATION TO A MEDICAL GENTLEMAN

TO ATTEND A MASONIC ANNIVERSARY MEETING.

St James's Masonic Lodge was wont to meet in the small back-room of a cottage like place of entertainment at Mauchline, kept by a person of the name of Manson. On the approach of St John's day, the 24th of June, Burns sent the following rhymed note on the subject to his medical friend, Mr Mackenzie, with whom, it seems, he had just had some controversy on the subject of morals:—

[1] Great-grandchild.

* John Hamilton, Esq., a worthy scion of a noble stock.

FRIDAY first 's the day appointed,
By our Right Worshipful anointed,
To hold our grand procession;
To get a blade o' Johnny's morals,
And taste a swatch[1] o' Manson's barrels,
I' the way of our profession.
Our Master and the Brotherhood
Wad a' be glad to see you;
For me I would be mair than proud
To share the mercies wi' you.
If death, then, wi' skaith, then,
Some mortal heart is hechtin',[2]
Inform him, and storm him,
That Saturday ye 'll fecht[3] him.

ROBERT BURNS.

THE FAREWELL.

"The following touching stanzas," says Cunningham, "were composed in the autumn of 1786, when the prospects of the poet darkened, and he looked towards the West Indies as a place of refuge, and perhaps of hope. All who shared his affections are mentioned—his mother—his brother Gilbert—his illegitimate child, Elizabeth,—whom he consigned to his brother's care, and for whose support he had appropriated the copyright of his poems,—and his friends Smith, Hamilton, and Aiken; but in nothing he ever wrote was his affection for Jean Armour more tenderly or more naturally displayed."

The valiant in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas! he multiplies himself,
To dearer selves, to the loved tender fair,
To those whose bliss, whose being hang upon him,
To helpless children! then, oh, then! he feels
The point of misery festering in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, such am I!—undone!"

—THOMSON'S *Edward and Eleanora.*

FAREWELL, old Scotia's bleak domains,
Far dearer than the torrid plains
Where rich ananas blow!
Farewell, a mother's blessing dear!
A brother's sigh! a sister's tear!
My Jean's heart-rending throe!
Farewell, my Bess! though thou 'rt bereft
Of my parental care;
A faithful brother I have left,
My part in him thou 'lt share!
Adieu too, to you too,
My Smith, my bosom frien';
When kindly you mind me,
Oh, then befriend my Jean!

---

[1] Sample. [2] Threatening. [3] Fight

What bursting anguish tears my heart!
From thee, my Jeanie, must I part!
Thou, weeping, answerest, "No!"
Alas! misfortune stares my face,
And points to ruin and disgrace,
I, for thy sake, must go!
Thee, Hamilton and Aiken dear,
A grateful, warm, adieu!
I, with a much-indebted tear,
Shall still remember you!
All hail then, the gale then,
Wafts me from thee, dear shore!
It rustles and whistles—
I'll never see thee more!

LINES WRITTEN ON A BANK-NOTE.

The bank-note, on the back of which these characteristic lines were written, is of the Bank of Scotland, and dated so far back as March 1, 1780. It came into the hands of the late Mr F. Gracie, banker in Dumfries, who knew the handwriting, and preserved it as a curiosity:—

WAE worth thy power, thou cursèd leaf!
Fell source o' a' my woe and grief!
For lack o' thee I've lost my lass!
For lack o' thee I scrimp my glass.
I see the children of affliction
Unaided, through thy cursed restriction.
I've seen the oppressor's cruel smile,
Amid his hapless victim's spoil,
And, for thy potence vainly wish'd
To crush the villain in the dust.
For lack o' thee, I leave this much-loved shore,
Never, perhaps, to greet auld Scotland more.

R. B.—Kyle.

VERSES TO AN OLD SWEETHEART AFTER HER MARRIAGE.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF HIS POEMS PRESENTED TO THE LADY.

The name of the lady to whom these verses were given has not been mentioned Burns, it is evident, had at the time they were written no better prospect before him than emigration to the West Indies.

ONCE fondly loved, and still remember'd dear;
Sweet early object of my youthful vows!
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere,—
Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.

And when you read the simple, artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him—he asks no more,—
Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic's roar.

VERSES WRITTEN UNDER VIOLENT GRIEF.

The following lines, which first appeared in the *Scots* newspaper, April 1823, appear to have been originally written on a leaf of a copy of his poems presented to a friend:—

ACCEPT the gift a friend sincere
Wad on thy worth be pressin';
Remembrance oft may start a tear,
But oh! that tenderness forbear,
Though 'twad my sorrows lessen.

My morning raise sae clear and fair,
I thought sair storms wad never
Bedew the scene; but grief and care
In wildest fury hae made bare
My peace, my hope, for ever!

You think I'm glad; oh, I pay weel
For a' the joy I borrow,
In solitude—then, then I feel
I canna to myself conceal
My deeply-ranklin' sorrow.

Farewell! within thy bosom free
A sigh may whiles awaken;
A tear may wet thy laughin' ee,
For Scotia's son—ance gay like thee—
Now hopeless, comfortless, forsaken!

THE CALF.

TO THE REV. MR JAMES STEVEN.

The Rev. James Steven was afterwards one of the Scottish clergy in London, and ultimately minister of Kilwinning in Ayrshire. It appears that the poet, while proceeding to church at Mauchline one day, called on his friend Mr Gavin Hamilton, who, being unwell, could not accompany him, but desired him, as parents were wont to do with children, to bring home a note of the text. Burns called on his return, and sitting down for a minute at Mr Hamilton's business table, wrote the following lines as an answer to his request. It is also said that the poet had a wager with his friend Hamilton, that he would produce a poem within a certain time, and that he gained it by producing "The Calf."

On his text, MALACHI iv. 2.—"And they shall go forth, and grow up,
like CALVES of the stall"

RIGHT, sir! your text I'll prove it true
Though heretics may laugh;
For instance; there 's yoursel just now
God knows, an unco calf!

And should some patron be so kind
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt na, sir, but then we 'll find
Ye 're still as great a stirk.[1]

But if the lover's raptured hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, every heavenly power,
You e'er should be a stot![2]

Though, when some kind connubial dear
Your but-and-ben[3] adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of horns.

And in your lug, most reverend James,
To hear you roar and rowte,[4]
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the nowte.[5]

And when ye 're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
"Here lies a famous bullock!"

WILLIE CHALMERS.

Mr W. Chalmers, a gentleman in Ayrshire, a particular friend of mine, asked me to write a poetic epistle to a young lady, his dulcinea. I had seen her, but was scarcely acquainted with her, and wrote as follows:—R. B.

MADAM,
Wi' braw new branks,[6] in mickle pride,
And eke[7] a braw new brechan,[8]
My Pegasus I 'm got astride,
And up Parnassus pechin;[9]
Whiles owre a bush, wi' downward crush,
The doited beastie[10] stammers;
Then up he gets, and off he sets,
For sake o' Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na, lass, that weel-kenn'd name
May cost a pair o' blushes;
I am nae stranger to your fame,
Nor his warm-urgèd wishes.

---

1 A one-year-old bullock. 2 Ox. 3 Kitchen and parlour
4 Bellow. 5 Cattle. 6 Bridle. 7 Also
8 Collar. 9 Panting. 10 Stupid animal

Your bonny face, sae mild and sweet,
His honest heart enamours,
And faith ye 'll no be lost a whit,
Though waired[1] on Willie Chalmers.

Auld Truth hersel might swear ye 're fair,
And Honour safely back her,
And Modesty assume your air,
And ne'er a ane mistak' her:
And sic twa love-inspiring een
Might fire even holy palmers;
Nae wonder then they 've fatal been
To honest Willie Chalmers.

I doubt na Fortune may you shore[2]
Some mim-mou'd[3] pouther'd[4] priestie,
Fu' lifted up wi' Hebrew lore,
And band upon his breastie:
But oh! what signifies to you
His lexicons and grammars:
The feeling heart 's the royal blue,
And that 's wi' Willie Chalmers.

Some gapin', glowrin[5] country laird
May warsle[6] for your favour;
May claw his lug,[7] and straik[8] his beard,
And hoast[9] up some palaver.
My bonny maid, before ye wed
Sic clumsy-witted hammers,[10]
Seek Heaven for help, and barefit skelp[11]
Awa' wi' Willie Chalmers.

Forgive the bard! my fond regard
For ane that shares my bosom
Inspires my muse to gie 'm his dues,
For deil a hair I roose[12] him.
May powers aboon unite you soon,
And fructify your amours,—
And every year come in mair dear
To you and Willie Chalmers.

TAM SAMSON'S ELEGY.*

'No poet," says Cunningham, "ever emblazoned fact with fiction more happily than Burns: the hero of this poem was a respectable old nursery-seedsman in Kilmarnock greatly addicted to sporting, and one of the poet's earliest friends,

1 Spent.	2 Promise.	3 Prim.	4 Powdered.
5 Staring.	6 Strive.	7 Ear.	8 Stroke.
9 Cough.	10 Blockheads.	11 Run.	12 Flatter.

* When this worthy old sportsman went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, "the last of his fields;" and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.—*B.*

who loved curling on the ice in winter, and shooting on the moors in the season. When no longer able to march over hill and hag in quest of

'Paitricks, teals, moor-pouts, and plivers,'

he loved to lie on the lang settle, and listen to the deeds of others on field and flood; and when a good tale was told, he would cry, 'Hech, man! three at a shot; that was famous!' Some one having informed Tam, in his old age, that Burns had written a poem—'a gay queer ane' concerning him, he sent for the bard, and, in something like wrath, requested to hear it: he smiled grimly at the relation of his exploits, and then cried out, 'I'm no dead yet, Robin—I'm worth ten dead fowk: wherefore should ye say that I am dead?' Burns took the hint, retired to the window for a minute or so, and, coming back, recited the 'Per Contra,'

'Go, Fame, and canter like a filly,

with which Tam was so delighted that he rose unconsciously, rubbed his hands, and exclaimed, 'That'll do—ha! ha!—that'll do!' He survived the poet, and the epitaph is inscribed on his grave-stone in the churchyard of Kilmarnock."

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."—POPE.

HAS auld Kilmarnock seen the deil?
Or great Mackinlay* thrawn[1] his heel?
Or Robinson† again grown weel,
To preach and read?
"Na, waur than a'!" cries ilka chiel,
"Tam Samson's dead!"

Kilmarnock lang may grunt and grane,
And sigh, and sob, and greet[2] her lane,
And cleed[3] her bairns, man, wife, and wean,
In mourning weed;
To Death, she's dearly paid the kane[4]—
Tam Samson's dead!

The brethren o' the mystic level
May hing their head in waefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead;
Death's gien the lodge an unco devel[5]—
Tam Samson's dead!

When Winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire up like a rock;
When to the lochs the curlers flock
Wi' gleesome speed,
Wha will they station at the cock?—
Tam Samson's dead!

---

[1] Twisted. [2] Cry. [3] Clothe.
[4] Rent paid in kind. [5] Blow.

* A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. *Vide* "The Ordination," stanza II.—*B.*

† Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him, see also "The Ordination," stanza IX.—*B.*

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore;
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need;
But now he lags on Death's hog-score,—
Tam Samson 's dead!

Now safe the stately saumon sail,
And trouts be-dropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel kenn'd for souple tail,
And geds[1] for greed,
Since dark in Death's fish-creel we wail
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks[2] a';
Ye cootie[3] moorcocks, crousely[4] craw;
Ye maukins,[5] cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa',—
Tam Samson 's dead!

That waefu' morn be ever mourn'd
Saw him in shootin' graith[6] adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed;
But, ooh! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson 's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ankles fetters;
In vain the burns cam' down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now every auld wife, greetin', clatters,
Tam Samson 's dead!

Owre mony a weary hag[7] he limpit,
And aye the tither shot he thumpit,[8]
Till coward Death behind him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;[9]
Now he proclaims, wi' tout[10] o' trumpet,
Tam Samson 's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
"Lord, five!" he cried, and owre did stagger—
Tam Samson 's dead!

---

1 Pikes. 2 Whirring partridges. 3 Feather-legged. 4 Gleefully
5 Hares. 6 Dress. 7 Moss. 8 Fired.
9 Feud. 10 Scund.

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father:
Yon auld gray stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Whare Burns has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson 's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest;
Perhaps upon his mouldering breast
Some spitefu' moorfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch and breed;
Alas! nae mair he 'll them molest!
Tam Samson 's dead!

When august winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his memory crave
O' pouther and lead,
Till Echo answer frae her cave—
Tam Samson 's dead!

Heaven rest his saul, whare'er he be!
Is the wish o' mony mae than me;
He had twa fauts, or maybe three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social honest man want we—
Tam Samson 's dead?

EPITAPH.

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots, spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye 'll mend or ye win near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, and canter like a filly,
Through a' the streets and neuks o' Killie,*
Tell every social, honest billie
To cease his grievin',
For yet, unskaithed[1] by Death's gleg gullie,[2]
Tam Samson 's leevin'!

[1] Unharmed. [2] Sharp knife.

* Killie is a phrase the country-folks sometimes use for the name of a certain town in the west [Kilmarnock.]—*B.*

A PRAYER.

LEFT BY THE AUTHOR AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE, IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

'The first time," says Gilbert Burns, "Robert heard the spinnet played upon was while on a visit at the house of Dr Lawrie, then minister of the parish of Loudon, a few miles from Mossgiel, and with whom he was on terms of intimacy. Dr Lawrie had several daughters—one of them played; the father and the mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the poet, and the other guests mixed in it. It was a delightful family-scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas were left in the room where he slept."

O THOU dread Power, who reign'st above!
I know Thou wilt me hear,
When for this scene of peace and love
I make my prayer sincere.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long, be pleased to spare!
To bless his filial little flock,
And show what good men are.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
Oh, bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

Their hope—their stay—their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush—
Bless him, Thou GOD of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

The beauteous seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on every hand—
Guide Thou their steps alway!

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May they rejoice, no wanderer lost,
A family in heaven!

THE BRIGS OF AYR.

INSCRIBED TO JOHN BALLANTYNE, ESQ., AYR.

In the autumn of 1786, a new bridge was begun to be erected over the river at Ayr, in order to supersede an old structure which had long been found unsuitable, and was then becoming dangerous; and while the work was being proceeded with, under the chief magistracy of Mr Ballantyne, the poet's generous patron, he seized the opportunity to display his gratitude by inscribing the

poem to him. The idea of the poem appears to have been taken from Fergusson's "Dialogue between the Plainstanes and the Causeway;" the treatment of the subject is, however, immeasurably superior to the older piece, and peculiarly Burns's own.

THE simple bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from every bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green-thorn bush;
The soaring lark, the perching redbreast shrill,
Or deep-toned plovers, gray, wild-whistling o'er the hill:
Shall he, nurst in the peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field—
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward!
Still, if some patron's generous care he trace,
Skill'd in the secret, to bestow with grace;
When Ballantyne befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,
With heart-felt throes his greatful bosom swells,
The godlike bliss, to give, alone excels.

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter-hap,[1]
And thack[2] and rape secure the toil-won crap;
Potato-bings[3] are snuggèd up frae skaith[4]
O' coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their summer toils,
Unnumber'd buds and flowers' delicious spoils
Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils, smoor'd[5] wi' brimstone reek:
The thundering guns are heard on every side
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds!)
Nae mair the flower in field or meadow springs,
Nae mair the grove with airy concert rings
Except, perhaps, the robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
While thick the gossamer waves wanton in the rays.

1 Covering. 2 Thatch. 3 Heaps.
4 Harm. 5 Smothered.

'Twas in that season, when a simple bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of Ayr,
By whim inspired, or haply prest wi' care,
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by Simpson's* wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate,
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or penitential pangs for former sins,
Led him to rove by quondam Merran Dins;
Or whether, rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out, he knew not where nor why)
The drowsy Dungeon clock† had number'd two,
And Wallace Tower‡ had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoln Firth, wi' sullen sounding roar,
Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore.
All else was hush'd as Nature's closèd ee:
The silent moon shone high o'er tower and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream

When, lo! on either hand the listening bard,
The clanging sugh of whistling wings is heard;
Two dusky forms dart through the midnight air,
Swift as the gos § drives on the wheeling hare;
Ane on the Auld Brig his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the rising piers:
Our warlock rhymer instantly descried
The sprites that owre the Brigs of Ayr preside.
(That bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
And ken the lingo of the spiritual folk;
Fays, spunkies, kelpies, a', they can explain them,
And even the very deils they brawly ken[1] them.)
Auld Brig appear'd o' ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face:
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstled lang,
Yet, teughly doure,[2] he bade an unco bang.[3]
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he at Lon'on frae ane Adams got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth 's a bead,
Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in every arch;—
It chanced his new-come neibor took his ee,
And e'en a vex'd and angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless[4] sneer to see his modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him this guid e'en:—

1 Well know. 2 Toughly obdurate. 3 He endured a mighty blow
4 Cold, forbidding.

* A noted tavern at the Auld Brig end.—*B.*

† A clock in a steeple connected with the old jail of Ayr.

‡ The clock in the Wallace Tower—an anomalous piece of antique masonry surmounted by a spire, which formerly stood in the High Street of Ayr.

§ The goshawk, or falcon.—*B.*

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na, frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheepshank,[1]
Ance ye were streekit[2] owre frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me—
Though, faith, that date I doubt ye'll never see—
There'll be, if that date come, I'll wad a boddle,[3]
Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,[4]
Just much about it, wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor narrow footpath of a street—
Where twa wheelbarrows tremble when they meet—
Your ruin'd, formless bulk o' stane and lime,
Compare wi' bonny brigs o' modern time?
There's men o' taste would tak the Ducat Stream,*
Though they should cast the very sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
O' sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk![5] puff'd up wi' windy pride!
This mony a year I've stood the flood and tide;
And though wi' crazy eild[6] I'm sair forfairn,[7]
I'll be a brig when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling Coil,
Or stately Lugar's mossy fountains boil,
Or where the Greenock winds his moorland course,
Or haunted Garpal† draws his feeble source,
Aroused by blustering winds and spotting thowes,
In mony a torrent down his snaw-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring spate,[8]
Sweeps dams, and mills, and brigs, a' to the gate;[9]
And from Glenbuck,‡ down to the Ratton-key,§
Auld Ayr is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea—
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups[10] up to the pouring skies.
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

---

1 No worthless thing. 2 Stretched. 3 Bet a doit. 4 Civility
5 Fool. 6 Age. 7 Enfeebled. 8 Flood.
9 Way. 10 Muddy spray.

* A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.—*B.*

† The banks of Garpal Water one of the few places in the West of Scotland where those fancy-scaring beings known by the name of ghaists still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.—*B.*

‡ The source of the river Ayr.—*B.*

§ A small landing-place above the large key.—*B.*

NEW BRIG.

Fine Architecture, trowth, I needs must say o't,
The Lord be thankit that we 've tint[1] the gate o't!
Gaunt, ghastly, ghaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threatening jut, like precipices;
O'erarching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves;
Windows and doors, in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam statuary's dream,
The crazed creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the second dread command be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason reptile, bird, or beast;
Fit only for a doited[2] monkish race,
Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace;
Or cuifs[3] of later times wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our guid brugh denies protection!
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd ancient yealings,[4]
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy proveses, and mony a bailie,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil aye;
Ye dainty deacons, and ye douce conveeners,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners!
Ye godly councils wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly brethren o' the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gae your hurdies to the smiters;
And (what would now be strange) ye godly writers;
A' ye douce folk I 've borne aboon the broo,[5]
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation
To see each melancholy alteration;
And, agonising, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degenerate race!
Nae langer reverend men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story!
Nae langer thrifty citizens and douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the council-house;
But staumrel,[6] corky-headed, graceless gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men three parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your weel-hain'd gear on damn'd new brigs and harbours!

[1] Lost. [2] Stupid. [3] Fools.
[4] Coevals. [5] Water. [6] Half-witted.

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye 've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through;[1]
That 's aye a string auld doited gray-beards harp on,
A topic for their peevishness to carp on.
As for your priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and clergy are a shot right kittle:
But, under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' magistrates might weel be spared:
To liken them to your auld-warld squad,
I must needs say comparisons are odd.
In Ayr, wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle
To mouth "a citizen," a term o' scandal;
Nae mair the council waddles down the street,
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
No difference but bulkiest or tallest,
With comfortable dulness in for ballast;
Nor shoals nor currents need a pilot's caution,
For regularly slow, they only witness motion;
Men wha grew wise priggin' owre hops and raisins,
Or gather'd liberal views in bonds and seisins,
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shored[2] them wi' a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common Sense for once betray'd them.
Plain, dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

What further clishmaclaver[3] might been said,
What bloody wars, if sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glittering stream they featly danced;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanced:
They footed o'er the watery glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling bards heroic ditties sung.
Oh, had M'Lachlan,* thairm[4]-inspiring sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When through his dear strathspeys they bore with Highland rage;
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptured joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug[5] been nobler fired,
And even his matchless hand with finer touch inspired!
No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

---

[1] Make good. [2] Exposed. [3] Palaver.
[4] Cat-gut. [5] Ear.

* A well-known performer of Scottish music on the violin.—*B.*

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable chief advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter-tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flowery hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn, wreathed with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleach'd locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow.
Next follow'd Courage, with his martial stride,
From where the Feal* wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild, benignant air,
A female form came from the towers of Stair:†
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple Catrine, their long-loved abode:‡
Last, white-robed Peace, crowned with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instruments of death;
At sight of whom our sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

LINES

ON MEETING WITH LORD DAER.

[In 1786, Professor Dugald Stewart, the well-known expounder of the Scottish system of metaphysics, resided in a villa at Catrine, on the Ayr, a few miles from the poet's farm; and having heard of his astonishing poetical productions, through Mr Mackenzie, a talented and generous surgeon in Mauchline, he invited Burns to dine with him, accompanied by his medical friend. The poet seems to have been somewhat alarmed at the idea of meeting so distinguished a member of the literary world: and, to increase his embarrassment, it happened that Lord Daer, (son of the Earl of Selkirk,) an amiable young nobleman, was on a visit to the professor at the time. The result, however, appears to have been rather agreeable than otherwise to the poet, who has recorded his feelings on the subject in the following lines:—

THIS wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day!
Sae far I sprachled[1] up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a lord.

---

[1] Clambered.

* The poet here alludes to Captain Montgomery of Coilsfield—soger Hugh—afterwards twelfth Earl of Eglinton, whose seat of Coilsfield is situated on the Feal, or Faile, a tributary stream of the Ayr.

† A compliment to his early patroness, Mrs Stewart of Stair.

‡ A well-merited tribute to Professor Dugald Stewart.

I 've been at drucken writers' feasts,
Nay, been bitch fou 'mang godly priests ;
(Wi' rev'rence be it spoken !)
I 've even join'd the honour'd jorum
When mighty squireships o' the quorum
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a lord !—stand out, my shin :
A lord—a peer—an earl's son !—
Up higher yet, my bonnet !
And sic a lord !—lang Scotch ells twa,
Our peerage he o'erlooks them a',
As I look o'er my sonnet.

But, oh ! for Hogarth's magic power !
To show Sir Bardie's willyart glower,[1]
And how he stared and stammer'd !
When goavan,[2] as if led wi' branks,[3]
And stumpin' on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

To meet good Stewart little pain is,
Or Scotia's sacred Demosthenes ;
Thinks I, they are but men !
But Burns, my lord—guid God ! I doited ![4]
My knees on ane anither knoited,[5]
As faultering I gaed ben ![6]

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
And at his lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen ;
Except good sense and social glee,
And (what surprised me) modesty,
I markèd nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state,
The arrogant assuming ;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state, that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his lordship I shall learn
Henceforth to meet with unconcern
One rank as weel 's another ;
Nae honest, worthy man need care,
To meet wi' noble, youthful DAER,
For he but meets a brother.

---

1 Bewildered stare. 2 Moving stupidly. 3 Bridle.
4 Became stupified. 5 Knocked. 6 Into the room.

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

Writing to his friend, William Chalmers, the poet says:—"I enclose you two poems, which I have carded and spun since I passed Glenbuck. 'Fair Burnet' is the heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter of Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once. There has not been anything nearly like her in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness the great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence!"

EDINA! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sovereign powers!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy Trade his labour plies;
There Architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here Justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There Learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks Science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, Edina! social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarged, their liberal mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to Sorrow's wail,
Or modest Merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name!

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn,
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptured thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own His work indeed divine.

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough, rude fortress gleams afar;
Like some bold veteran, gray in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar:
The ponderous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock,
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd the invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where Scotia's kings of other years,
Famed heroes! had their royal home:
Alas, how changed the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust!
Their hapless race wild-wandering roam!
Though rigid law cries out, 'Twas just.

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors, in days of yore,
Through hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old Scotia's bloody lion bore:
Even I who sing in rustic lore,
Haply, my sires have left their shed,
And faced grim Danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where your fathers led!

Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat Legislation's sovereign powers!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

THE POET'S WELCOME TO HIS ILLEGITIMATE CHILD.*

There can be no doubt that the feeling which prompted the composition of this and similar poems was not that of the reckless Libertine who was lost to all shame, and was without regard for the good opinion of his fellows. Lockhart hits the truth when he says:—"To wave (in his own language) the quantum of the sin, he who, two years afterwards, wrote the 'Cotter's Saturday Night' had not, we may be sure, hardened his heart to the thought of bringing additional sorrow and unexpected shame to the fireside of a widowed mother. But his false pride recoiled from letting his jovial associates guess how little he was able to drown the whispers of the 'still small voice;' and the fermenting bitterness of a mind ill at ease within itself escaped (as may be too often traced in the history of satirists) in the shape of angry sarcasms against others, who, whatever their private errors might be, had at least done him no wrong. It is impossible not to smile at one item of consolation which Burns proposes to himself on this occasion:—

---

* The subject of these verses was the poet's illegitimate daughter whom, in 'The Inventory," he styles his

"Sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess."

She grew up to womanhood, was married, and had a family. Her death is thus announced in the *Scots Magazine*, December 8, 1817: "Died Elizabeth Burns, wife of Mr John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, near Whitburn. She was the laughter of the celebrated Robert Burns, and the subject of some of his most beautiful lines.

The mair they talk, I'm kenn'd the better;
E'en let them clash!

This is indeed a singular manifestation of 'the last infirmity of noble minds.'

THOU 's welcome, wean! mishanter[1] fa' me,
If ought of thee, or of thy mammy,
Shall ever danton me, or awe me,
My sweet wee lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt ca' me
Tit-ta or daddy.

Wee image of my bonny Betty,
I fatherly will kiss and daut[2] thee,
As dear and near my heart I set thee
Wi' as guid will,
As a' the priests had seen me get thee
That 's out o' hell.

What though they ca' me fornicator,
And tease my name in kintra clatter:[3]
The mair they talk I 'm kenn'd the better,
E'en let them clash![4]
An auld wife's tongue 's a feckless[5] matter
To gie ane fash.[6]

Sweet fruit o' mony a merry dint,
My funny toil is now a' tint,
Sin' thou came to the warld asklent,[7]
Which fools may scoff at;
In my last plack thy part 's be in 't—
The better half o 't.

And if thou be what I wad hae thee,
And tak the counsel I shall gie thee,
A lovin' father I 'll be to thee,
If thou be spared:
Through a' thy childish years I 'll ee thee,
And think 't weel wared.

Guid grant that thou may aye inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, and merit,
And thy poor worthless daddy's spirit,
Without his failin's,
'Twill please me mair to hear and see 't,
Than stockit mailins.[8]

TO MRS C——,

ON RECEIVING A WORK OF HANNAH MORE'S.

THOU flattering mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind

[1] Misfortune. [2] Fondle. [3] Country talk. [4] Gossip.
[5] Very small. [6] Trouble. [7] Irregularly. [8] Stocked farms.

The dear, the beauteous donor!
Though sweetly female every part,
Yet such a head, and more the heart,
Does both the sexes honour.
She show'd her taste refined and just
When she selected thee,
Yet deviating, own I must,
For so approving me.
But kind still, I mind still
The giver in the gift,
I'll bless her, and wiss her
A Friend above the lift.[1]

TO MISS LOGAN,

WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS AS A NEW-YEAR'S GIFT, JAN. 1, 1787.

Miss Susan Logan was the sister of the Major Logan to whom Burns wrote a rhymed epistle He was indebted to both for many pleasant hours when he was suffering from despondency.

AGAIN the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driven,
And you, though scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer heaven.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts,
In Edwin's simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charged, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An Edwin still to you!

VERSES

INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN BELOW A NOBLE EARL'S PICTURE.

"The enclosed stanzas," said the poet, in a letter to his patron, the Earl of Glencairn, "I intended to write below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with anything of a likeness."

WHOSE is that noble, dauntless brow?
And whose that eye of fire?
And whose that generous princely mien
Even rooted foes admire?

---

[1] Sky.

Stranger, to justly show that brow,
And mark that eye of fire,
Would take His hand, whose vernal tints
His other works admire.

Bright as a cloudless summer sun,
With stately port he moves;
His guardian seraph eyes with awe
The noble ward he loves.

Among the illustrious Scottish sons
That chief thou mayst discern;
Mark Scotia's fond returning eye—
It dwells upon Glencairn.

TO A HAGGIS.

The haggis is a dainty peculiar to Scotland, though it is supposed to be an adaptation of a French dish. It is composed of minced offal of mutton, mixed with meal and suet, to which are added various condiments by way of seasoning, and the whole is tied up tightly in a sheep's stomach, and boiled therein. Although the ingredients of this dish are not over inviting, the poet does not far exceed poetical licence in singing its praises. We would recommend the reader to turn to page 173 of vol. i. of Wilson's "Noctes Ambrosianæ," where he will find a graphic and humorous description of a monster haggis, and what resulted from cutting it up. The *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, 1829, made the following statement: "About sixteen years ago there resided at Mauchline Mr Robert Morrison, cabinetmaker. He was a great crony of Burns's, and it was in Mr Morrison's house that the poet usually spent the 'mids o' the day' on Sunday. It was in this house that he wrote his celebrated 'Address to a Haggis,' after partaking liberally of that dish as prepared by Mrs Morrison."

FAIR fa' your honest, sonsie[1] face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin' race!
Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:[2]
Weel are ye worthy of a grace
As lang 's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your pin* wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While through your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,[3]
And cut you up wi' ready slight,

---

[1] Jolly. [2] Small intestines. [3] Wipe.

* A wooden skewer with which it is lifted out and in to the vessel in which it is cooked, and which also serves the purpose of securing the mouth of the bag.

His knife see rustic labour dight
And cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
Like ony ditch,
And then, oh, what a glorious sight!
Warm-reekin', rich!

—*To a Haggis, page* 138

Trenching your gushing entrails bright
Like ony ditch;
And then, oh, what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin',[1] rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch and strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
Till all their weel-swall'd kytes belyve *
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guidman, maist like to rive,[2]
Bethankit hums.

Is there that owre his French ragoût,
Or olio that wad staw a sow,[3]
Or fricassee wad mak her spew[4]
Wi' perfect scunner,[5]
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless[6] as a wither'd rash,
His spindle-shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve[7] a nit:
Through bloody flood or field to dash,
Oh, how unfit!

But mark the rustic, haggis-fed,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He 'll mak it whissle;
And legs, and arms, and heads will sned,[8]
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye powers wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants nae skinking ware[9]
That jaups[10] in luggies;[11]
But if ye wish her gratefu' prayer,
Gie her a haggis!

PROLOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR WOODS† ON HIS BENEFIT NIGHT, MONDAY, APRIL 16, 1787

WHEN by a generous public's kind acclaim,
That dearest meed is granted—honest fame:

---

1 Smoking. 2 Burst. 3 Pig. 4 Vomit
5 Loathing. 6 Pithless. 7 Fist. 8 Cut off.
9 Thin stuff. 10 Splashes. 11 Wooden bowls with upright handles.

* Till all their well-swollen bellies by and by.

† Mr Woods had been the friend of Fergusson. He was long a favourite actor in Edinburgh, and was himself a man of some poetical talent.

When here your favour is the actor's lot,
Nor even the man in private life forgot;
What breast so dead to heavenly virtue's glow,
But heaves impassion'd with the grateful throe?

Poor is the task to please a barbarous throng,
It needs no Siddons' powers in Southern's song;
But here an ancient nation famed afar,
For genius, learning high, as great in war—
Hail, CALEDONIA! name for ever dear!
Before whose sons I 'm honour'd to appear!
Where every science—every nobler art—
That can inform the mind, or mend the heart,
Is known; as grateful nations oft have found,
Far as the rude barbarian marks the bound.
Philosophy, no idle pedant dream,
Here holds her search by heaven-taught Reason's beam;
Here History paints with elegance and force,
The tide of Empire's fluctuating course;
Here Douglas forms wild Shakespeare into plan,
And Harley* rouses all the god in man,
When well-form'd taste and sparkling wit unite
With manly lore, or female beauty bright,
(Beauty, where faultless symmetry and grace,
Can only charm us in the secon l place.)
Witness my heart, how oft with panting fear,
As on this night, I 've met these judges here!
But still the hope Experience taught to live,
Equal to judge—you 're candid to forgive.
No hundred-headed Riot here we meet,
With decency and law beneath his feet:
Nor Insolence assumes fair Freedom's name;
Like CALEDONIANS, you applaud or blame.

O Thou dread Power! whose empire-giving hand
Has oft been stretch'd to shield the honour'd land!
Strong may she glow with all her ancient fire!
May every son be worthy of his sire!
Firm may she rise with generous disdain
At Tyranny's, or direr Pleasure's, chain!
Still self-dependent in her native shore,
Bold may she brave grim Danger's loudest roar,
Till Fate the curtain drops on worlds to be no more.

NATURE'S LAW.

HUMBLY INSCRIBED TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

These verses were first published in Mr Pickering's edition of the poet's works, printed from the original MS. in the poet's handwriting. They appear to have been written shortly after "Bonny Jean" had presented him with twins.

---

* Henry Mackenzie, author of "The Man of Feeling."

"Great Nature spoke—observant man obey'd."—POPE.

LET other heroes boast their scars,
The marks of sturt and strife;
And other poets sing of wars,
The plagues of human life:
Shame fa' the fun, wi' sword and gun,
To slap mankind like lumber!
I sing his name and nobler fame,
Wha multiplies our number.

Great Nature spoke, with air benign,
"Go on, ye human race!
This lower world I you resign;
Be fruitful and increase.
The liquid fire of strong desire
I've pour'd it in each bosom;
Here, in this hand, does mankind stand,
And there is beauty's blossom!"

The hero of these artless strains,
A lowly bard was he,
Who sung his rhymes in Coila's plains,
With mickle mirth and glee;
Kind Nature's care had given his share
Large of the flaming current;
And all devout, he never sought
To stem the sacred torrent.

He felt the powerful, high behest,
Thrill, vital, through and through;
And sought a correspondent breast
To give obedience due:
Propitious Powers screen'd the young flower
From mildews of abortion;
And lo! the bard, a great reward,
Has got a double portion!

Auld cantie Coil may count the day,
As annual it returns,
The third of Libra's equal sway,
That gave another Burns,
With future rhymes, and other times,
To emulate his sire;
To sing auld Coil in nobler style,
With more poetic fire.

Ye powers of peace, and peaceful song,
Look down with gracious eyes;
And bless auld Coila, large and long,
With multiplying joys;
Lang may she stand to prop the land,
The flower of ancient nations;
And Burns's spring, her fame to sing,
To endless generations!

THE HERMIT.

WRITTEN ON A MARBLE SIDEBOARD IN THE HERMITAGE BELONGING TO THE DUKE OF ATHOLE, IN THE WOOD OF ABERFELDY.

This poem was brought to light by Mr Peter Buchan, himself a poet, and editor of the "Scottish Legendary Ballads," and first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the poet's works. It is believed to be authentic.

WHOE'ER thou art, these lines now reading,
Think not, though from the world receding,
I joy my lonely days to lead in
This desert drear;
That fell remorse, a conscience bleeding,
Hath led me here.

No thought of guilt my bosom sours;
Free-will'd I fled from courtly bowers;
For well I saw in halls and towers
That lust and pride,
The arch-fiend's dearest, darkest powers,
In state preside.

I saw mankind with vice incrusted;
I saw that Honour's sword was rusted,
That few for aught but folly lusted;
That he was still deceived who trusted
To love or friend;
And hither came, with men disgusted,
My life to end.

In this lone cave, in garments lowly,
Alike a foe to noisy folly,
And brow-bent gloomy melancholy,
I wear away
My life, and in my office holy
Consume the day.

This rock my shield, when storms are blowing;
The limpid streamlet yonder flowing
Supplying drink, the earth bestowing
My simple food;
But few enjoy the calm I know in
This desert wood.

Content and comfort bless me more in
This grot than e'er I felt before in
A palace—and with thoughts still soaring
To God on high,
Each night and morn, with voice imploring,
This wish I sigh—

"Let me, O Lord! from life retire,
Unknown each guilty worldly fire,

Remorse's throb, or loose desire;
And when I die,
Let me in this belief expire—
To God I fly."

Stranger, if full of youth and riot,
And yet no grief has marr'd thy quiet,
Thou haply throw'st a scornful eye at
The hermit's prayer,
But if thou hast good cause to sigh at
Thy fault or care;

If thou hast known false love's vexation,
Or hast been exiled from thy nation,
Or guilt affrights thy contemplation,
And makes thee pine,
Oh! how must thou lament thy station,
And envy mine!

SKETCH OF A CHARACTER.

"This fragment," says Burns to Dugald Stewart, "I have not shown to man living till I now send it to you. It forms the postulata, the axioms, the definition of a character, which, if it appear at all, shall be placed in a variety of lights. This particular part I send you merely as a sample of my hand at portrait-sketching."

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight:
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets:
A man of fashion, too, he made his tour,
Learn'd *Vive la bagatelle, et Vive l'amour!*
So travell'd monkies their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay, sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore, but little understood;
Veneering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

VERSES

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER THE DEATH OF JOHN M'LEOD, ESQ., BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S

SAD thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deckt with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smiled;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguiled.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That nature finest strung:
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was wrung.

Were it in the poet's power,
Strong as he shares the grief
That pierces Isabella's heart,
To give that heart relief!

Dread Omnipotence alone
Can heal the wound He gave;
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtue's blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.

Sir James Hunter Blair, who died in 1787, was a partner in the eminent banking house of Sir William Forbes and Co., of Edinburgh.

The lamp of day, with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sunk beneath the western wave;
The inconstant blast howl'd through the darkening air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.

Lone as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
Once the loved haunts of Scotia's royal train;*
Or mused where limpid streams, once hallow'd, well,†
Or mouldering ruins mark the sacred fane.‡

The increasing blast roar'd round the beetling rocks,
The clouds, swift-wing'd, flew o'er the starry sky,
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

---

* The King's Park, at Holyrood House.
† St Anthony's Well.
‡ St Anthony's Chapel.

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclosed a stately form,
In weeds of woe, that frantic beat her breast,
And mix'd her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
'Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd:
Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

Reversed that spear, redoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurl'd,
That like a deathful meteor gleam'd afar,
And braved the mighty monarchs of the world.

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms she cried;
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd to save,
Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest pride.

"A weeping country joins a widow's tear,
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
The drooping arts surround their patron's bier,
And grateful science heaves the heartfelt sigh!

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair Freedom's blossoms richly blow:
But ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless Fate has laid their guardian low.

"My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name?
No; every Muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

"And I will join a mother's tender cares,
Through future times to make his virtues last;
That distant years may boast of other Blairs!"—
She said, and vanish'd with the sleeping blast.

TO MISS FERRIER,

ENCLOSING THE ELEGY ON SIR J. H. BLAIR.

During the poet's sojourn in Edinburgh his Muse of fire appears never to have ascended its highest heaven of invention. A few days after the death of his patron, Sir James Hunter Blair, he was wandering in a musing mood along George Street, which was at that time so remote from the great centre of business as to be considered almost in the country, when he accidentally met Miss Ferrier, eldest daughter of Mr J. Ferrier, W.S., one of his warmest patrons, and father of Miss Ferrier, the well-known novelist. In the sparkling eyes of this young lady, who afterwards became Mrs General Graham, the poet seems to have found the inspiration he was in search of.

K

NAE heathen name shall I prefix
Frae Pindus or Parnassus;
Auld Reekie dings[1] them a' to sticks.
For rhyme-inspiring lasses.

Jove's tunefu' dochters three times three
Made Homer deep their debtor;
But, gien the body half an ee,
Nine Ferriers wad done better!

Last day my mind was in a bog,
Down George's Street I stoited;[2]
A creeping, cauld, prosaic fog
My very senses doited.[3]

Do what I dought[4] to set her free,
My saul lay in the mire;
Ye turn'd a neuk[5]—I saw your ee—
She took the wing like fire!

The mournfu' sang I here enclose,
In gratitude I send you;
And [wish and] pray in rhyme sincere,
A' guid things may attend you.

LINES

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL OVER THE CHIMNEYPIECE IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.

This and the following poem, with their fine and appreciative description of magnificent scenery, must have escaped the notice of the writer of the article in the *North British Review* for March 1865. This article, which is said to be from the pen of John Hill Burton, is meant to prove that the Scottish Muse ignored allusions to romantic scenery until recently. Professor Walker says, "Burns passed two or three days with the Duke of Athole, and was highly delighted by the attention he received, and the company to whom he was introduced. By the Duke's advice he visited the Falls of Bruar, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness, with the following verses enclosed:"—

ADMIRING Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
The abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
Till famed Breadalbane opens to my view,—
The meeting cliffs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild scatter'd, clothe their ample sides,
The outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills:

---

[1] Beats. [2] Tottered. [3] Stupified.
[4] Would. [5] Corner.

The Tay, meandering sweet in infant pride,
The palace, rising on its verdant side;
The lawns, wood-fringed in Nature's native taste;
The hillocks, dropt in Nature's careless haste;
The arches, striding o'er the new-born stream;
The village, glittering in the noontide beam—

. . . . . .

Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wandering by the hermit's mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods!
The incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods.

. . . . . .

Here Poesy might wake her Heaven-taught lyre,
And look through Nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of Fate half-reconciled,
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter, rankling wounds;
Here heart-struck Grief might heavenward stretch her scan,
And injured Worth forget and pardon man.

. . . . . .

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR WATER*

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

My lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Emboldened thus, I beg you 'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foamy streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumpin', glowrin' trouts,
That through my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I 'm scorching up so shallow,
They 're left, the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat wi' spite and teen,
As Poet Burns came by,
That to a bard I should be seen
Wi' half my channel dry:

---

* Bruar Falls, in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs.—*B.*

A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was he shored[1] me;
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad adored me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well,
As nature gave them me,
I am, although I say't mysel,
Worth gaun[2] a mile to see.

Would, then, my noblest master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' towering trees,
And bonny spreading bushes.
Delighted doubly, then, my lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock,[3] warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, Music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir;
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis[4] mild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

This, too, a covert shall insure,
To shield them from the storms;
And coward maukins[5] sleep secure
Low in their grassy forms:
The shepherd here shall make his seat,
To weave his crown of flowers;
Or find a sheltering safe retreat,
From prone descending showers.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds, with all their wealth,
As empty idle care.
The flowers shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heaven to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

Here haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,

[1] Promised. [2] Going. [3] Lark.
[4] Thrush. [5] Hares.

And eye the smoking dewy lawn,
And misty mountain gray;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,[1]
Mild-chequering through the trees
Rave to my darkly-dashing stream,
Hoarse swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' watery bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close-embowering thorn.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may through Albion's furthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonny lasses!"

LINES

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL, STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS, NEAR LOCH NESS.

AMONG the heathy hills and ragged woods
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
_ill full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, through a shapeless breach, his stream resounds,
As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep-recoiling surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless Echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.
Dim seen through rising mists and ceaseless showers,
The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding, lowers.
Still, through the gap the struggling river toils,
And still, below, the horrid caldron boils.

. . . . . .

CASTLE-GORDON.

These lines were written after Burns's brief visit to Gordon Castle. The poet enclosed them to James Hoy, librarian to the Duke of Gordon. The duchess guessed them to be by Dr Beattie, and on learning they were by Burns, regretted they were not in the Scottish language.

---

[1] The harvest moon.

STREAMS that glide in orient plains,
Never bound by Winter's chains!
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commix'd with foulest stains
From tyranny's empurpled bands:
These, their richly-gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle-Gordon.

Spicy forests, ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray
Hapless wretches sold to toil,
Or the ruthless native's way,
Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil:
Woods that ever verdant wave,
I leave the tyrant and the slave,
Give me the groves that lofty brave
The storms by Castle-Gordon.

Wildly here without control,
Nature reigns and rules the whole;
In that sober pensive mood,
Dearest to the feeling soul,
She plants the forest, pours the flood:
Life's poor day I'll musing rave,
And find at night a sheltering cave,
Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
By bonny Castle-Gordon.

ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL IN LOCH TURIT,

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OCHTERTYRE.

WHY, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your watery haunts forsake?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below:

Plumes himself in freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.
The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels:
But man, to whom alone is given
A ray direct from pitying Heaven,
Glories in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.
In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wandering swains,
Where the mossy rivulet strays,
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.
Or, if man's superior might
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his powers you scorn:
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave
Scorn at least to be his slave.

TO MISS CRUIKSHANK,

A VERY YOUNG LADY. WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

This young lady was the subject of one of the poet's songs, "A Rosebud by my Early Walk." She was the daughter of Mr Cruikshank, No. 30 St James's Square, Edinburgh, with whom the poet resided for some time during one of his visits to Edinburgh. She afterwards became the wife of Mr Henderson, a solicitor in Jedburgh.

BEAUTEOUS rosebud, young and gay,
Blooming in thy early May,
Never mayst thou, lovely flower,
Chilly shrink in sleety shower!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' poisonous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

Mayst thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem:
'Till some evening, sober calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,

While all around the woodland rings,
And every bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

POETICAL ADDRESS TO MR WILLIAM TYTLER.

WITH A PRESENT OF THE BARD'S PICTURE.

William Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee, to whom these lines were addressed, wrote a work in defence of Mary Queen of Scots, and earned the gratitude of Burns, who had all a poet's sympathies for the unfortunate and beautiful queen. Mr Tytler was grand-father to Patrick Fraser Tytler, the author of "The History of Scotland."

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,—
A name which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected.

Though something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wanderer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wanderer were royal.

My fathers that name have revered on a throne;
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The queen, and the rest of the gentry;
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine—
Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of this epocha make such a fuss
That gave us the Hanover stem;
If bringing them over was lucky for us,
I'm sure 'twas as lucky for them.

But, loyalty, truce! we're on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter?
The doctrine to-day that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care:
But accept it, good sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT DUNDAS, ESQ., OF ARNISTON,*

LATE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF SESSION.

In a letter to Dr Geddes, Burns tells the fate of this poem, and makes his own comment:—"The following elegy has some tolerable lines in it, but the incurable wound of my pride will not suffer me to correct, or even peruse, it. I sent a copy of it, with my best prose letter, to the son of the great man, the theme of the piece, by the hands of one of the noblest men in God's world—Alexander Wood, surgeon. When, behold! his solicitorship took no more notice of my poem or me than if I had been a strolling fiddler who had made free with his lady's name over a silly new reel! Did the gentleman imagine that I looked for any dirty gratuity?"

LONE on the bleaky hills the straying flocks
Shun the fierce storms among the sheltering rocks;
Down foam the rivulets, red with dashing rains;
The gathering floods burst o'er the distant plains;
Beneath the blast the leafless forests groan;
The hollow caves return a sullen moan.

Ye hills, ye plains, ye forests, and ye caves,
Ye howling winds, and wintry-swelling w^aves!
Unheard, unseen, by human ear or eye,
Sad to your sympathetic scenes I fly;
Where, to the whistling blast and waters' roar
Pale Scotia's recent wound I may deplore.
Oh heavy loss, thy country ill could bear!
A loss these evil days can ne'er repair!
Justice, the high vicegerent of her God,
Her doubtful balance eyed, and sway'd her rod;
She heard the tidings of the fatal blow,
And sunk, abandon'd to the wildest woe.

Wrongs, injuries, from many a darksome den,
Now gay in hope explore the paths of men:
See, from his cavern, grim Oppression rise,
And throw on Poverty his cruel eyes;
Keen on the helpless victim see him fly,
And stifle, dark, the feebly-bursting cry.

Mark ruffian Violence, distain'd with crimes,
Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
As guileful Fraud points out the erring way:
While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong:
Hark! injured Want recounts th' unlisten'd tale,
And much-wrong'd Misery pours the unpitied wail!

* Elder brother to Viscount Melville, born 1713, appointed President in 1760, and died December 13, 1787, after a short illness.

Ye dark waste hills, and brown unsightly plains,
To you I sing my grief-inspirèd strains:
Ye tempests, rage! ye turbid torrents, roll!
Ye suit the joyless tenor of my soul.
Life's social haunts and pleasures I resign,
Be nameless wilds and lonely wanderings mine,
To mourn the woes my country must endure,
That wound degenerate ages cannot cure.

TO CLARINDA.

ON THE POET'S LEAVING EDINBURGH.

The maiden name of Clarinda was Agnes Craig. At the time Burns made her acquaintance she was the wife of a Mr M'Lehose, from whom she had been separated on account of incompatibility of temper, &c. She seems to have entertained a sincere affection for the poet. Burns, who was always engaged in some affair of the heart, seems to have been much less sincere. His letters to her are somewhat forced and stilted, and contrast very unfavourably with those of hers which have been preserved. He soon forgot her, however, to her great regret and mortification. She was beautiful and accomplished, and a poetess. The poet in one of his letters to her thus alludes to one of her productions:—"Your last verses to me have so delighted me that I have got an excellent old Scots air that suits the measure, and you shall see them in print in the *Scots Musical Museum*, a work publishing by a friend of mine in this town. The air is 'The Banks of Spey,' and is most beautiful. I want four stanzas—you gave me but three, and one of them alluded to an expression in my former letter: so I have taken your first two verses, with a slight alteration in the second, and have added a third; but you must help me to a fourth. Here they are; the latter half of the first stanza would have been worthy of Sappho; I am in raptures with it:—

"'Talk not of Love, it gives me pain,
For Love has been my foe;
He bound me with an iron chain,
And plunged me deep in woe.

"'But friendship's pure and lasting joys
My heart was form'd to prove;
There, welcome, win, and wear the prize,
But never talk of Love.

"'Your friendship much can make me blest,
Oh! why that bliss destroy?
Why urge the odious [only] one request
You know I must [will] deny?'

"*P.S.*—What would you think of this for a fourth stanza?

"'Your thought, if Love must harbour there,
Conceal it in that thought;
Nor cause me from my bosom tear
The very friend I sought.'"

These verses are inserted in the second volume of the *Musical Museum*

CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
The measured time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie?
Deprived of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy!

We part—but, by these precious drops
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day;
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

TO CLARINDA.

WITH A PRESENT OF A PAIR OF DRINKING-GLASSES

FAIR empress of the poet's soul,
And queen of poetesses;
Clarinda, take this little boon,
This humble pair of glasses.

And fill them high with generous juice,
As generous as your mind;
And pledge me in the generous toast—
"The whole of humankind!"

"To those who love us!"—second fill;
But not to those whom we love;
Lest we love those who love not us!
A third—"To thee and me, love!"

Long may we live! long may we love!
And long may we be happy!
And may we never want a glass
Well charged with generous nappy!

TO CLARINDA.

BEFORE I saw Clarinda's face,
My heart was blithe and gay,
Free as the wind, or feather'd race
That hop from spray to spray.

But now dejected I appear,
Clarinda proves unkind;
I, sighing, drop the silent tear,
But no relief can find.

In plaintive notes my tale rehearses
When I the fair have found;
On every tree appear my verses
That to her praise resound.

But she, ungrateful, shuns my sight,
My faithful love disdains,
My vows and tears her scorn excite—
Another happy reigns.

Ah, though my looks betray,
I envy your success;
Yet love to friendship shall give way,
I cannot wish it less.

TO CLARINDA.

"I BURN, I burn, as when through ripen'd corn,
By driving winds, the crackling flames are borne!"
Now maddening, wild, I curse that fatal night;
Now bless the hour which charm'd my guilty sight.
In vain the laws their feeble force oppose;
Chain'd at his feet they groan, Love's vanquish'd foes:
In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye;
I dare not combat—but I turn and fly:
Conscience in vain upbraids the unhallow'd fire;
Love grasps its scorpions—stifled they expire;
Reason drops headlong from his sacred throne,
Your dear idea reigns, and reigns alone:
Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
And riots wanton in forbidden fields!

By all on high adoring mortals know!
By all the conscious villain fears below!
By your dear self!—the last great oath I swear—
Nor life nor soul was ever half so dear!

LINES

WRITTEN IN FRIARS' CARSE HERMITAGE, ON THE BANKS OF THE NITH.

(*First Version.*)

Burns thought so well of this poem, that he preserved both copies. The first was written in June 1783. The MS. of the amended copy is headed, "Altered from the foregoing, in December 1788." The hermitage in which these lines were written was on the property of Captain Riddel of Friars' Carse, a beautiful house with fine grounds, a mile above Ellisland. One of the many kindly favours extended to the poet by Captain Riddel and his accomplished lady was the permission to wander at will in the beautiful grounds of Friars' Carse. The first six lines were graven with a diamond on a pane of glass in a window of the hermitage.

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these maxims on thy soul :—

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Day, how rapid in its flight—
Day, how few must see the night;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lower.
Happiness is but a name,
Make content and ease thy aim;
Ambition is a meteor gleam;
Fame an idle, restless dream:
Pleasures, insects on the wing
Round Peace, the tenderest flower of Spring!
Those that sip the dew alone,
Make the butterflies thy own;
Those that would the bloom devour
Crush the locusts—save the flower.
For the future be prepared,
Guard whatever thou canst guard:
But, thy utmost duly done,
Welcome what thou canst not shun.
Follies past give thou to air,
Make their consequence thy care:
Keep the name of man in mind,
And dishonour not thy kind.
Reverence with lowly heart
Him whose wondrous work thou art;
Keep His goodness still in view,
Thy trust—and thy example, too.

Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quoth the Beadsman on Nithside.

LINES

WRITTEN IN FRIARS' CARSE HERMITAGE, ON NITHSIDE

(*Second Version.*)

THOU whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul :—

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lower.

As Youth and Love, with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning-star advance,
Pleasure, with her siren air,
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let Prudence bless Enjoyment's cup,
Then raptured sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful Peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among

As the shades of evening close,
Beckoning thee to long repose;
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-neuk of ease,
There ruminate with sober thought
On all thou 'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younkers round,
Saws of experience sage and sound:
Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not—Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Wast thou cottager or king?
Peer or peasant?—no such thing!
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal Nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heaven
To Virtue or to Vice is given.
Say, "To be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid Self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base."

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break,
Till future life—future no more—
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before!

Stranger, go! Heaven be thy guide!
Quoth the beadsman of Nithside.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.

The poet says:—"'The Mother's Lament' was composed partly with a view to Mrs Fergusson of Craigdarroch and partly to the worthy patroness of my early unknown muse, Mrs Stewart of Afton." It was also inserted in the *Musical Museum*, to the tune of "Finlayston House."

FATE gave the word, the arrow sped,
And pierced my darling's heart;
And with him all the joys are fled
Life can to me impart.
By cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonour'd laid;
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age's future shade.

The mother-linnet in the brake
Bewails her ravish'd young;
So I, for my lost darling's sake,
Lament the live-day long.
Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow,
Now, fond, I bare my breast,
Oh, do thou kindly lay me low
With him I love, at rest!

ELEGY ON THE YEAR 1788.

A SKETCH.

Cunningham says:—"Truly has the ploughman bard described the natures of those illustrious rivals, Fox and Pitt, under the similitude of the 'birdie cocks.' Nor will the allusion to the 'hand-cuffed, muzzled, half-shackled regent' be lost on those who remember the alarm into which the nation was thrown by the king's illness."

FOR lords or kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them die—for that they 're born!
But oh! prodigious to reflec'!
A towmont,[1] sirs, is gane to wreck!
O Eighty-eight, in thy sma' space
What dire events hae taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire 's tint[2] a head,
And my auld teethless Bawtie 's[3] dead;
The tulzie 's[4] sair 'tween Pitt and Fox,
And our guidwife's wee birdie cocks;
The tane is game, a bluidy devil,
But to the hen-birds unco civil;
The tither 's something dour o' treadin',
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden.

[1] Twelvemonth. [2] Lost. [3] His dog. [4] Fight.

Ye ministers, come mount the pu'pit,
And cry till ye be hoarse and roopit,
For Eighty-eight he wish'd you weel,
And gied you a' baith gear[1] and meal;
E'en mony a plack, and mony a peck,
Ye ken yoursels, for little feck![2]

Ye bonny lasses, dight[3] your een,
For some o' you hae tint a frien';
In Eighty-eight, ye ken,[4] was ta'en
What ye'll ne'er hae to gie again.

Observe the very nowte[5] and sheep,
How dowf and dowie[6] now they creep;
Nay, even the yirth itsel does cry,
For Embrugh wells are grutten[7] dry.

O Eighty-nine, thou's but a bairn,
And no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak care,
Thou now hast got thy daddy's chair,
Nae hand-cuff'd, muzzled, half-shackled regent,
But, like himsel, a full, free agent.
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae waur[8] than he did, honest man!
As muckle better as you can.

Jan. 1, 1789.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL OF GLENRIDDEL.

EXTEMPORE LINES ON RETURNING A NEWSPAPER.

The newspaper sent contained some sharp strictures on the poet's works.

ELLISLAND, *Monday Evening.*

YOUR news and review, sir, I 've read through and through, sir,
With little admiring or blaming;
The papers are barren of home news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends, the reviewers, those chippers and hewers,
Are judges of mortar and stone, sir;
But of *meet* or *unmeet*, in a *fabric complete*,
I boldly pronounce they are none, sir.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your goodness
Bestow'd on your servant, the poet;
Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, sir, should know it!

---

1 Goods. 2 Work. 3 Wipe. 4 Know. 5 Cattle.
6 Pithless and low-spirited. 7 Wept. 8 Worse

ODE:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS OSWALD.

The origin of this bitter and not very creditable effusion is thus related by the poet in a letter to Dr Moore:—"The enclosed 'Ode' is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs Oswald of Auchincruive. You probably knew her personally, an honour which I cannot boast, but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath she was much less blamable. In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had to put up at Bailie Whigham's in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day; and just as my friend the bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late Mrs Oswald; and poor I am forced to brave all the terrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse—my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus—further on, through the wildest hills and moors of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say that, when a good fire at New Cumnock had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed 'Ode.'" The poet lived to think more favourably of the name: one of his finest lyrics, "Oh, wat ye wha's in yon town," was written in honour of the beauty of the succeeding Mrs Oswald.

DWELLER in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation, mark!
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonour'd years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
Can thy keen inspection trace
Aught of humanity's sweet melting grace?
Note that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows,
Pity's flood there never rose.
See these hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took—but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied and unblest—
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
(A while forbear, ye torturing fiends;)
Seest thou whose step, unwilling, hither bends:
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies.
'Tis thy trusty quondam mate,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate.
She, tardy, hellward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glittering pounds a year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
Oh, bitter mockery of the pompous bier,
While down the wretched vital part is driven!
The cave-lodged beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to heaven.

TO JOHN TAYLOR.

'The poet,' says a correspondent of Cunningham's, 'it seems, during one of his journeys over his ten parishes as an exciseman, had arrived at Wanlockhead on a winter day, when the roads were slippery with ice, and Jenny Geddes, his mare, kept her feet with difficulty. The blacksmith of the place was busied with other pressing matters in the forge, and could not spare time for 'frosting' the shoes of the poet's mare, and it is likely he would have proceeded on his dangerous journey, had he not bethought himself of propitiating the son of Vulcan with verse. He called for pen and ink, wrote these verses to John Taylor, a person of influence in Wanlockhead; and when he had done, a gentleman of the name of Sloan, who accompanied him added these words:—'J. Sloan's best compliments to Mr Taylor, and it would be doing him and the Ayrshire bard a particular favour, if he would oblige them instanter with his agreeable company. The road has been so slippery that the riders and the brutes were equally in danger of getting some of their bones broken. For the poet, his life and limbs are of some consequence to the world; but for poor Sloan, it matters very little what may become of him. The whole of this business is to ask the favour of getting the horses' shoes sharpened.' On the receipt of this, Taylor spoke to the smith; the smith flew to his tools, sharpened the horses' shoes, and, it is recorded, lived thirty years to say he had never been 'weel paid but ance, and that was by the poet, who paid him in money, paid him in drink, and paid him in verse.'"

WITH Pegasus upon a day,
Apollo weary flying,
Through frosty hills the journey lay.
On foot the way was plying.

Poor slipshod giddy Pegasus
Was but a sorry walker;
To Vulcan then Apollo goes,
To get a frosty caulker.*

Obliging Vulcan fell to work,
Threw by his coat and bonnet,
And did Sol's business in a crack;
Sol paid him with a sonnet.

Ye Vulcan's sons of Wanlockhead,
Pity my sad disaster;
My Pegasus is poorly shod—
I'll pay you like my master.

RAMAGE'S, *three o'clock.* ROBERT BURNS

* A nail put into a shoe to prevent the foot from slipping in frosty weather.

SKETCH:

INSCRIBED TO THE RIGHT HON. C. J. FOX.

[In a letter to Mrs Dunlop the poet says, "I have a poetic whim in my head, which I at present dedicate, or rather inscribe, to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox; but how long that fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the first lines I have just rough-sketched as follows:"—

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white;
How genius, the illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—
I sing: if these mortals, the critics, should bustle,
I care not, not I—let the critics go whistle!

But now for a patron, whose name and whose glory
At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits;
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem mere lucky hits;
With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong;
With passions so potent, and fancies so bright,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite right;—
A sorry, poor misbegot son of the Muses,
For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

Good Lord, what is man? for as simple he looks,
Do but try to develop his hooks and his crooks;
With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil;
All in all he's a problem must puzzle the devil.
On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely labours,
That, like the old Hebrew walking-switch, eats up its neighbours
Mankind are his show-box—a friend, would you know him?
Pull the string, ruling passion the picture will show him.
What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,
One trifling particular truth should have miss'd him;
For, spite of his fine theoretic positions,
Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its tribe,
And think human nature they truly describe;
Have you found this, or t'other? there 's more in the wind,
As by one drunken fellow his comrades you 'll find.
But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan,
In the make of that wonderful creature call'd man,
No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
Nor even two different shades of the same,
Though like as was ever twin brother to brother,
Possessing the one shall imply you 've the other.

But truce with abstraction, and truce with a Muse,
Whose rhymes you 'll perhaps, sir, ne'er deign to peruse:

Will you leave your justings, your jars, and your quarrels,
Contending with Billy for proud-nodding laurels?
My much-honour'd patron, believe your poor poet,
Your courage much more than your prudence you show it;
In vain with Squire Billy for laurels you struggle,
He 'll have them by fair trade, if not, he will smuggle;
Not cabinets even of kings would conceal 'em,
He 'd up the back-stairs, and by God he would steal 'em.
Then feats like Squire Billy's you ne'er can achieve 'em,
It is not, outdo him, the task is out-thieve him.

VERSES

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT.

This poem was founded on a real incident. James Thomson, a neighbour of the poet's, states that having shot at, and wounded a hare, it ran past the poet, who happened to be near, "he cursed me, and said he would not mind throwing me into the water; and I'll warrant he could hae done't, though I was both young and strong."

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art.
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field!
The bitter little that of life remains:
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I, musing, wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn;
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

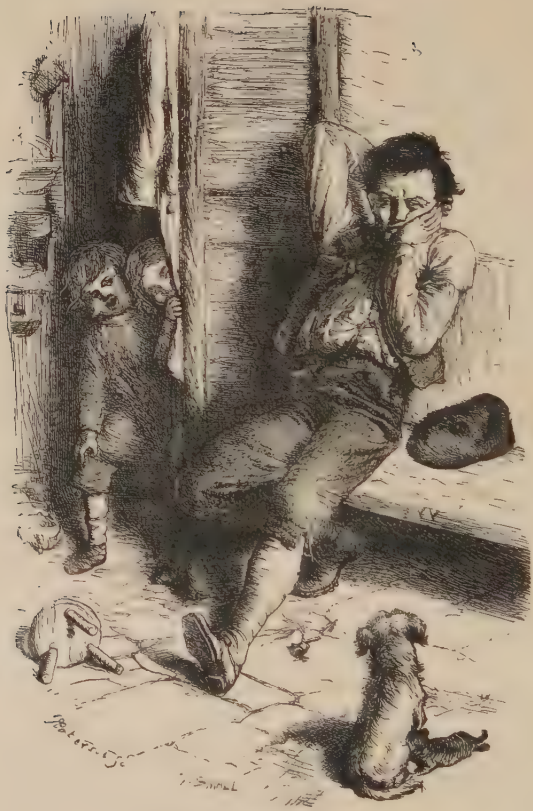
DELIA.

AN ODE.

This ode was sent to the *Star* newspaper with the following characteristic letter:—"Mr Printer, If the productions of a simple ploughman can merit a place in the same paper with the other favourites of the Muses who illuminate the *Star* with the lustre of genius, your insertion of the enclosed trifle will be succeeded by future communications from, yours, &c.,

"ROBERT BURNS.

"ELLISLAND, NEAR DUMFRIES, *May* 18, 1789."



Adown my beard the slavers trickle !
I kick the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle
To see me loup !

—*Address to the Toothache*, page 165.

FAIR the face of orient day,
Fair the tints of opening rose;
But fairer still my Delia dawns,
More lovely far her beauty blows.

Sweet the lark's wild-warbled lay,
Sweet the tinkling rill to hear;
But, Delia, more delightful still,
Steal thine accents on mine ear.

The flower-enamour'd busy bee,
The rosy banquet loves to sip;
Sweet the streamlet's limpid lapse
To the sun-brown'd Arab's lip.

But, Delia, on thy balmy lips
Let me, no vagrant insect, rove!
Oh, let me steal one liquid kiss!
For, oh! my soul is parch'd with love!

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.

WRITTEN WHEN THE AUTHOR WAS GRIEVOUSLY TORMENTED BY THAT DISORDER.

MY curse upon thy venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortured gums alang;
And through my lugs gies mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Aye mocks our groan!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle!
I kick the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle,[1]
To see me loup;[2]
While, raving mad, I wish a heckle*
Were in their doup.

---

[1] The mirthful children laugh. [2] Jump.

* A frame in which is stuck, sharp ends uppermost, from fifty to a hundred steel spikes, through which the hemp is drawn to straighten it for manufacturing purposes.

Of a' the numerous human dools,[1]
Ill hairsts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,
Or worthy friends raked i' the mools,[2]
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' misery yell,
And rankèd plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell
Amang them a'!

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes of discord squeel,
Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a shoe thick,
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
A towmond's[3] toothache!

THE KIRK'S ALARM.

A SATIRE.

We quote Lockhart's account of the origin of the "Kirk's Alarm:"—"M'Gill, and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of original sin and the Trinity; and the former at length published 'An Essay on the Death of Jesus Christ,' which was considered as demanding the notice of the Church courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this: and at last, Dr M'Gill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologising for them to his congregation from the pulpit, which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of M'Gill, who was a man of cold, unpopular manners, but of unreproached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments. The bulk of the lower orders espoused, with far more fervid zeal, the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were, of course, on the side of M'Gill—Auld and the Mauchline elders with his enemies. Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of M'Gill's cause before the presbytery and the synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton's, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance which soon ripened into a warm friendship with Burns. Burns was, therefore, from the beginning, a zealous, as in the end he was, perhaps, the most effective, partisan of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation."

ORTHODOX, orthodox,
Wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience –
There 's a heretic blast
Has been blawn i' the wast,
That what is not sense must be nonsense.

---

[1] Troubles. [2] Grave—earth. [3] Twelvemonth's.

Doctor Mac,* Doctor Mac,
You should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil-doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense,
Upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr,
It was mad, I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John† is still deaf
To the Church's relief,
And Orator Bob‡ is its ruin.

D'rymple mild,§ D'rymple mild,
Though your heart 's like a child,
And your life like the new-driven snaw;
Yet that winna save ye,
Auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three 's ane and twa.

Rumble John,‖ Rumble John,
Mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lug out your ladle,
Deal brimstone like adle,[1]
And roar every note of the damn'd.

Simper James,¶ Simper James,
Leave the fair Killie[2] dames,
There 's a holier chase in your view;
I 'll lay on your head
That the pack ye 'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there 's but few.

Singet Sawney,** Singet[3] Sawney,
Are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evil await?
Wi' a jump, yell, and howl,
Alarm every soul,
For the foul thief is just at your gate.

---

[1] Putrid water. [2] Kilmarnock. [3] Singed.

Dr M'Gill.

† John Ballantyne, Esq., provost of Ayr, to whom the "Twa Brigs" is dedicated.

‡ Mr Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, to whom the "Cotter's Saturday Night" is inscribed. He was agent for Dr M'Gill in the presbytery and synod.

§ The Rev. Dr William Dalrymple, senior minister of the collegiate church of Ayr.

‖ The Rev. John Russell, celebrated in the "Holy Fair."

¶ The Rev. James Mackinlay, the hero of the "Ordination."

** The Rev. Alexander Moodie, of Riccarton one of the heroes of the "Twa Herds."

Daddy Auld,* Daddy Auld,
There 's a tod[1] in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the clerk;†
Though ye downa do skaith,[2]
Ye 'll be in at the death,
And if ye canna bite, ye can bark.

Davie Bluster,‡ Davie Bluster,
For a saunt if ye muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits;
Yet to worth let 's be just,
Royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass were the king of the brutes.

Jamie Goose,§ Jamie Goose,
Ye hae made but toom roose,[3]
In hunting the wicked lieutenant;
But the doctor 's your mark,
For the Lord's haly ark
He has cooper'd and ca'd[4] a wrang pin in 't.

Poet Willie,‖ Poet Willie,
Gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your "Liberty's chain" and your wit;
O'er Pegasus' side
Ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he ——

Andro Gouk,¶ Andro Gouk,
Ye may slander the book,
And the book nane the waur, let me tell ye;
Though ye 're rich, and look big,
Yet lay by hat and wig,
And ye 'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value.

Barr Steenie,** Barr Steenie,
What mean ye, what mean ye?
If ye 'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may hae some pretence
To havins[5] and sense,
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

---

[1] Fox. [2] Harm. [3] Empty fame.
[4] Driven. [5] Good manners.

* The Rev. Mr Auld, of Mauchline.
† The clerk was Mr Gavin Hamilton, who had been a thorn in the side of Mr Auld.
‡ Mr Grant, Ochiltree. § Mr Young, Cumnock.
‖ The Rev. Dr Peebles, of Newton-upon-Ayr, the author of an indifferent poem on the centenary of the Revolution, in which occurred the line to which the poet alludes.
¶ Dr Andrew Mitchell, Monkton, a wealthy member of presbytery.
** Rev. Stephen Young, Barr

Irvine side,* Irvine side,
Wi' your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma' is your share;
Ye 've the figure, 'tis true,
Even your faes will allow,
And your friends they daur grant you nae mair.

Muirland Jock,† Muirland Jock,
When the Lord makes a rock
To crush Common Sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit,
There 's no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ance.

Holy Will,‡ Holy Will,
There was wit i' your skull
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
The timmer is scant,
When ye 're ta'en for a saunt,
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons,
Seize your spiritual guns,
Ammunition you never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff
Will be powther enough,
And your skulls are storehouses o' lead.

Poet Burns, Poet Burns,
Wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire?
Your muse is a gipsy—
E'en though she were tipsy,
She could ca' us nae waur than we are.

THE WHISTLE.

Burns says, "As the authentic prose history of the 'Whistle' is curious, I shall here give it:—In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James the Sixth, there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony whistle, which at the commencement of the orgies he laid on the table, and whoever was the last able to blow it, everybody else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the whistle as a trophy of victory. The Dane produced credentials of his victories, without a single defeat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty courts in Germany; and challenged the Scots Bacchanalians to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else of acknowledging their inferiority. After many overthrows on the part of the Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwelton, ancestor of the present worthy

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* Rev. Mr George Smith, Galston.
† Mr John Shepherd, Muirkirk.
‡ William Fisher, elder in Mauchline, whom Burns so often scourged.

baronet of that name, who, after three days' and three nights hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table,

And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill.

Sir Walter, son of Sir Robert before mentioned, afterwards lost the whistle to Wal er Riddel of Glenriddel, who had married a sister of Sir Walter's.—On Friday, the 16th of October 1789, at Friars' Carse, the whistle was once more contended for, as related in the ballad, by the present Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwelton; Robert Riddel, Esq., of Glenriddel, lineal descendant and representative of Walter Riddel, who won the whistle, and in whose family it had continued; and Alexander Ferguson, Esq., of Craigdarroch, likewise descended from the great Sir Robert, which last gentleman carried off the hard-won honours of the field."

A good deal of doubt was at one time felt as to whether Burns was present at the contest for the whistle—Professor Wilson having contended that he was not present, citing as evidence a letter to Captain Riddel, which will be found in the General Correspondence. These doubts are now set at rest. Captain Riddel, in replying to the letter mentioned, invited the poet to be present. He answered in the following verse:—

"The king's poor blackguard slave am I,
And scarce dow spare a minute;
But I'll be with you by and by,
Or else the devil 's in it!"—*B.*

Mr Chambers places the matter still further beyond doubt by quoting the testimony of William Hunter, then a servant at Friars' Carse, who was living in 1851, and who distinctly remembered that Burns was there, and, what was better still, that Burns was remarkably temperate during the whole evening, and took no part in the debauch.

I SING of a whistle, a whistle of worth,
I sing of a whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish king,
And long with this whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda,* still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—
"This whistle 's your challenge—to Scotland get o'er,
And drink them to hell, sir, or ne'er see me more!"

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventured, what champions fell;
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the whistle his requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Skarr,
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,
He drank his poor godship as deep as the sea,
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain'd;
Which now in his house has for ages remain'd;
Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw:
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;

* See Ossian's Caric-thura.—*B*

And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep-read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

"By the gods of the ancients!" Glenriddel replies,
"Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,*
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o'er."

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe—or his friend.
Said, Toss down the whistle, the prize of the field,
And, knee-deep in claret, he'd die ere he'd yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely dame.

A bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day;
A bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And every new cork is a new spring of joy;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er;
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,
And vow'd that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles apiece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore twas the way that their ancestors did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high ruling-elder to wallow in wine!
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with Fate and quart-bumpers contend?
Though Fate said—A hero shall perish in light;
So up rose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

* See Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.—*B.*

Next up rose our bard, like a prophet in drink:
"Craigdarroch, thou 'lt soar when creation shall sink!
But if thou wouldst flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime!

"Thy line, that have struggled for freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce:
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay;
The field thou hast won, by yon bright god of day!"

VERSES

ON CAPTAIN GROSE'S PEREGRINATIONS THROUGH SCOTLAND COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

Captain Grose, the hero of this poem, author of a work on the Antiquities of Scotland, was an enthusiastic antiquary, fond of good wine and good company. Burns met him at the hospitable table of Captain Riddel of Friars' Carse. He died in Dublin, of an apoplectic fit, in 1791, in the 52d year of his age.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk * to Johnny Groat's;
If there 's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent[1] it;
A chiel 's amang you takin' notes,
And, faith, he 'll prent it!

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel[2] wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That 's he, mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.†

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin',‡
Or kirk deserted by its riggin',
It 's ten to ane ye 'll find him snug in
Some eldritch[3] part,
Wi' deils, they say, Lord save 's! colleaguin
At some black art.

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chaumer,
Ye gipsy gang that deal in glamour,[4]
And you, deep read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;
Ye 'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight bitches!

---

[1] Heed. [2] Plump. [3] Unholy. [4] Black art.

* An inversion of the name of Kirkmaiden, in Wigtonshire, the most southerly parish in Scotland

† Alluding to his powers as a draughtsman.

‡ See his "Antiquities of Scotland."—*B.*

It 's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled ;
But now he 's quat the spurtle-blade
And dog-skin wallet,
And ta'en—the antiquarian trade,
I think they call it.

He has a fouth[1] o' auld nick-nackets,
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,*
Wad haud the Lothians three in tackets
A towmond guid ;
And parritch-pats, and auld saut-backets,
Afore the flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder ;
Auld Tubal Cain's fire-shool and fender ;
That which distinguishèd the gender
O' Balaam's ass ;
A broomstick o' the witch o' Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he 'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,[2]
The cut of Adam's philabeg :
The knife that nicket Abel's craig[3]
He 'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gully.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Guid fellows wi' him ;
And port, O port ! shine thou a wee,
And then ye 'll see him !

Now, by the powers o' verse and prose !
Thou art a dainty chiel, O Grose !—
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee ;
I 'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, Shame fa' thee !

LINES WRITTEN IN A WRAPPER,

ENCLOSING A LETTER TO CAPTAIN GROSE.

Burns having undertaken to gather some antiquarian and legendary material as to the ruins in Kyle, in sending them to Captain Grose under cover to Mr Cardonnel, a brother antiquary, the following verses, in imitation of the ancient

[1] Abundance. [2] Full quickly. [3] Throat

* See his "Treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons."—*B.*

ballad of "Sir John Malcolm," were enclosed. Cardonnel read them every where, much to the captain's annoyance, and to the amusement of his friends

KEN ye ought o' Captain Grose?
Igo and ago,
If he 's amang his friends or foes?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he south, or is he north?
Igo and ago,
Or drownèd in the river Forth?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he slain by Highlan' bodies?
Igo and ago,
And eaten like a wether-haggis?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he to Abra'm's bosom gane?
Igo and ago,
Or haudin' Sarah by the wame?
Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the Lord be near him!
Igo and ago,
As for the deil, he daurna steer him!
Iram, coram, dago.

But please transmit the enclosèd letter,
Igo and ago,
Which will oblige your humble debtor,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye hae auld stanes in store,
Igo and ago,
The very stanes that Adam bore,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye get in glad possession,
Igo and ago,
The coins o' Satan's coronation!
Iram, coram, dago.

SKETCH—NEW-YEAR'S DAY, [1790.]

TO MRS DUNLOP.

On the original MS. of these lines, the poet writes as follows:—"On second thoughts I send you this extempore blotted sketch. It is just the first random scrawl; but if you think the piece worth while, I shall retouch it, and finish it. Though I have no copy of it, my memory serves me."

THIS day, Time winds the exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonth's length again;

I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
In vain assail him with their prayer;
Deaf, as my friend, he sees them press,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.
Will you (the Major's* with the hounds,
The happy tenants share his rounds
Coila's fair Rachel's† care to-day,
And blooming Keith's ‡ engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow—
That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow—
And join with me a-moralising,
This day's propitious to be wise in.

First, what did yesternight deliver?
"Another year is gone for ever!"
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will Time, amused with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may—a few years must—
Repose us in the silent dust,
Then is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes—all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of Nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies:
That on this frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight:
That future life, in worlds unknown,
Must take its hue from this alone;
Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as Misery's woeful night.

Since, then, my honour'd, first of friends,
On this poor being all depends,
Let us the important *now* employ,
And live as those who never die.

Though you, with days and honours crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round,
(A sight, life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight, pale Envy to convulse,)
Others now claim your chief regard;
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

* Major, afterwards General, Andrew Dunlop, Mrs Dunlop's second son
† Miss Rachel Dunlop, who afterwards married Robert Glasgow, Esq.
‡ Miss Keith Dunlop, the youngest daughter.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN AT THE THEATRE, DUMFRIES, ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY EVENING, [1790.]

Burns, writing to his brother Gilbert, says:—"We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now: I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On New-year's Day I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause:"—

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city
That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Though, by the by, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home:
But not for panegyric I appear,
I come to wish you all a good new year!
Old Father Time deputes me here before ye,
Not for to preach, but tell his simple story.
The sage grave ancient cough'd, and bade me say,
"You're one year older this important day."
If wiser, too—he hinted some suggestion,
But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the question;
And with a would-be roguish leer and wink,
He bade me on you press this one word—"Think!"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush'd with hope and spirit,
Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
To you the dotard has a deal to say.
In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way!
He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
That the first blow is ever half the battle;
That though some by the skirt may try to snatch him,
Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him;
That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, though not least in love, ye faithful fair,
Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
To you old Bald-pate smooths his wrinkled brow,
And humbly begs you 'll mind the important Now!
To crown your happiness he asks your leave,
And offers bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, though haply weak, endeavours,
With grateful pride we own your many favours;
And howsoe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,
Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

TO THE OWL.

This poem was originally printed, from a MS. in the poet's handwriting, by Cromek, who threw some doubts on its being written by Burns. But as the MS. copy showed occasional interlineations in the same hand, there can be little doubt, we presume, as to its authenticity.

SAD bird of night, what sorrows call thee forth,
To vent thy plaints thus in the midnight hour?
Is it some blast that gathers in the north,
Threatening to nip the verdure of thy bower?

Is it, sad owl, that Autumn strips the shade,
And leaves thee here, unshelter'd and forlorn?
Or fear that Winter will thy nest invade?
Or friendless melancholy bids thee mourn?

Shut out, lone bird, from all the feather'd train,
To tell thy sorrows to the unheeding gloom;
No friend to pity when thou dost complain,
Grief all thy thought, and solitude thy home.

Sing on, sad mourner! I will bless thy strain,
And pleased in sorrow listen to thy song:
Sing on, sad mourner; to the night complain,
While the lone echo wafts thy notes along.

Is beauty less, when down the glowing cheek
Sad, piteous tears, in native sorrows fall?
Less kind the heart when anguish bids it break?
Less happy he who lists to pity's call?

Ah no, sad owl! nor is thy voice less sweet,
That sadness tunes it, and that grief is there;
That spring's gay notes, unskill'd, thou canst repeat;
That sorrow bids thee to the gloom repair.

Nor that the treble songsters of the day
Are quite estranged, sad bird of night! from thee;
Nor that the thrush deserts the evening spray,
When darkness calls thee from thy reverie.

From some old tower, thy melancholy dome,
While the gray walls, and desert solitudes,
Return each note, responsive to the gloom
Of ivied coverts and surrounding woods.

There hooting, I will list more pleased to thee
Than ever lover to the nightingale;
Or drooping wretch, oppress'd with misery,
Lending his ear to some condoling tale.

VERSES

ON AN EVENING VIEW OF THE RUINS OF LINCLUDEN ABBEY.*

YE holy walls, that, still sublime,
Resist the crumbling touch of time;
How strongly still your form displays
The piety of ancient days!
As through your ruins, hoar and gray—
Ruins yet beauteous in decay—
The silvery moonbeams trembling fly:
The forms of ages long gone by
Crowd thick on Fancy's wondering eye,
And wake the soul to musings high.
Even now, as lost in thought profound,
I view the solemn scene around,
And, pensive, gaze with wistful eyes,
The past returns, the present flies;
Again the dome, in pristine pride,
Lifts high its roof and arches wide,
That, knit with curious tracery,
Each Gothic ornament display.
The high-arch'd windows, painted fair,
Show many a saint and martyr there.
As on their slender forms I gaze,
Methinks they brighten to a blaze!
With noiseless step and taper bright,
What are yon forms that meet my sight?
Slowly they move, while every eye
Is heavenward raised in ecstasy.
'Tis the fair, spotless, vestal train,
That seek in prayer the midnight fane.
And, hark! what more than mortal sound
Of music breathes the pile around?
'Tis the soft-chanted choral song,
Whose tones the echoing aisles prolong;
Till, thence return'd, they softly stray
O'er Cluden's wave, with fond delay;
Now on the rising gale swell high,
And now in fainting murmurs die;
The boatmen on Nith's gentle stream,
That glistens in the pale moonbeam,
Suspend their dashing oars to hear
The holy anthem, loud and clear;
Each worldly thought a while forbear,
And mutter forth a half-form'd prayer.
But, as I gaze, the vision fails,
Like frost-work touch'd by southern gales;
The altar sinks, the tapers fade,
And all the splendid scene 's decay'd;

* On the banks of the river Cluden, and at a short distance from Dumfries, are the beautiful ruins of the Abbey of Lincluden, which was founded in the time of Malcolm, the fourth King of Scotland.

In window fair the painted pane
No longer glows with holy stain,
But through the broken glass the gale
Blows chilly from the misty vale;
The bird of eve flits sullen by,
Her home these aisles and arches high!
The choral hymn, that erst so clear
Broke softly sweet on Fancy's ear,
Is drown'd amid the mournful scream
That breaks the magic of my dream!
Roused by the sound, I start and see
The ruin'd sad reality!

PROLOGUE,

FOR MR SUTHERLAND'S BENEFIT NIGHT, DUMFRIES.

This prologue was accompanied with the following letter to Mr Sutherland, the manager of the Dumfries Theatre:—

"*Monday Morning.*

"I was much disappointed in wanting your most agreeable company yesterday. However, I heartily pray for good weather next Sunday; and whatever aerial being has the guidance of the elements, he may take any other half dozen of Sundays he pleases, and clothe them with

Vapours, and clouds, and storms,
Until he terrify himself
At combustion of his own raising.

I shall see you on Wednesday forenoon. In the greatest hurry.—R. B."

WHAT needs this din about the town o' Lon'on,
How this new play and that new sang is comin'?
Why is outlandish stuff sae meikle[1] courted?
Does nonsense mend like whisky, when imported?
Is there nae poet, burning keen for fame,
Will try to gie us sangs and plays at hame?
For comedy abroad he needna toil,
A fool and knave are plants of every soil;
Nor need he hunt as far as Rome and Greece
To gather matter for a serious piece;
There 's themes enow in Caledonian story,
Would show the tragic muse in a' her glory.

Is there no daring bard will rise and tell
How glorious Wallace stood, how hapless fell?
Where are the Muses fled that could produce
A drama worthy o' the name o' Bruce;
How here, even here, he first unsheath'd the sword,
'Gainst mighty England and her guilty lord,

[1] Much

And after mony a bloody, deathless doing,
Wrench'd his dear country from the jaws of ruin?
Oh for a Shakespeare or an Otway scene
To draw the lovely, hapless Scottish queen!
Vain all the omnipotence of female charms
'Gainst headlong, ruthless, mad Rebellion's arms.
She fell, but fell with spirit truly Roman,
To glut the vengeance of a rival woman:
A woman—though the phrase may seem uncivil—
As able and as cruel as the devil!
One Douglas lives in Home's immortal page,
But Douglases were heroes every age:
And though your fathers, prodigal of life,
A Douglas followed to the martial strife,
Perhaps if bowls row right, and Right succeeds,
Ye yet may follow where a Douglas leads!

As ye hae generous done, if a' the land
Would take the Muses' servants by the hand;
Not only hear, but patronise, befriend them,
And where ye justly can commend, commend them;
And aiblins when they winna stand the test,
Wink hard and say the folks hae done their best!
Would a' the land do this, then I'll be caution
Ye'll soon hae poets o' the Scottish nation,
Will gar Fame blaw until her trumpet crack,
And warsle[1] Time, and lay him on his back!
For us and for our stage should ony spier,
"Wha's aught thae chiels maks a' this bustle here?"
My best leg foremost, I'll set up my brow,
We have the honour to belong to you!
We're your ain bairns, e'en guide us as ye like,
But like good mithers, shore[3] before ye strike.
And gratefu' still I hope ye'll ever find us,
For a' the patronage and meikle kindness
We've got frae a' professions, sets, and ranks;
God help us! we're but poor—ye'se get but thanks.

STANZAS ON THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY.

On being questioned as to the propriety of satirising people unworthy of his notice, and the Duke of Queensberry being cited as an instance, Burns drew out his pencil and penned the following bitter lines as his reply:—

How shall I sing Drumlanrig's Grace—
Discarded remnant of a race
Once great in martial story?
His forbears' virtues all contrasted—
The very name of Douglas blasted—
His that inverted glory.

---

[1] Wrestle. [2] Ask. [3] Threaten

Hate, envy, oft the Douglas bore;
But he has superadded more,
And sunk them in contempt;
Follies and crimes have stain'd the name;
But, Queensberry, thine the virgin claim,
From aught that 's good exempt.

VERSES TO MY BED.

THOU bed, in which I first began
To be that various creature—*man!*
And when again the fates decree,
The place where I must cease to be;—
When sickness comes, to whom I fly,
To soothe my pain, or close mine eye;—
When cares surround me where I weep,
Or lose them all in balmy sleep;—
When sore with labour, whom I court,
And to thy downy breast resort—
Where, too, ecstatic joys I find,
When deigns my Delia to be kind—
And full of love, in all her charms,
Thou givest the fair one to my arms.
The centre thou, where grief and pain,
Disease and rest, alternate reign.
Oh, since within thy little space
So many various scenes take place;
Lessons as useful shalt thou teach,
As sages dictate—churchmen preach;
And man, convinced by thee alone,
This great important truth shall own:—
That thin partitions do divide
The bounds where good and ill reside;
That nought is perfect here below;
But *bliss* still bordering upon *woe.*

ELEGY ON PEG NICHOLSON.

Peg Nicholson, the "good bay mare," belonged to Mr William Nicol, a fast friend of the poet's, and was so named from a frantic virago who attempted the life of George III. The poet enclosed the following verses in a letter to his friend, in February 1790, with a long account of the deceased mare, which letter will be found in the correspondence of that year.

PEG Nicholson was a good bay mare
As ever trode on airn;[1]
But now she 's floating down the Nith,
And past the mouth o' Cairn.

---

[1] Iron.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare.
And rode through thick and thin:
But now she 's floating down the Nith,
And wanting even the skin.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And ance she bore a priest;
But now she 's floating down the Nith,
For Solway fish a feast.
Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And the priest he rode her sair;
And much oppress'd and bruised she was,
As priest-rid cattle are.

LINES

WRITTEN TO A GENTLEMAN WHO HAD SENT HIM A NEWSPAPER, AND OFFERED TO CONTINUE IT FREE OF EXPENSE.

KIND sir, I 've read your paper through,
And, faith, to me 'twas really new!
How guess'd ye, sir, what maist I wanted?
This mony a day I 've gran'd[1] and gaunted[2]
To ken what French mischief was brewin',
Or what the drumlie Dutch were doin';
That vile doup-skelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;
Or how the collieshangie[3] works
Atween the Russians and the Turks;
Or if the Swede, before he halt,
Would play anither Charles the Twalt:
If Denmark, anybody spak o 't;
Or Poland, wha had now the tack[4] o 't;
How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin';[5]
How libbet[6] Italy was singin';
If Spaniards, Portuguese, or Swiss
Were sayin' or takin' aught amiss:
Or how our merry lads at hame,
In Britain's court, kept up the game;
How royal George, the Lord leuk o'er him!
Was managing St Stephen's quorum;
If sleekit[7] Chatham Will was livin',
Or glaikit[8] Charlie got his nieve[9] in;
How Daddie Burke the plea was cookin',
If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin';[10]
How cesses, stents, and fees were rax'd,[11]
Or if bare a—s yet were tax'd;

---

1 Groaned. 2 Yawned. 3 Quarrel. 4 Lease
5 Hanging. 6 Castrated. 7 Sly. 8 Thoughtless
9 Fist 10 Itching. 11 Stretched.

The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera girls;
If that daft buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was threshin' still at hizzies' tails;
Or if he was grown oughtlins douser,[1]
And no a perfect kintra cooser.
A' this and mair I never heard of;
And but for you I might despair'd of.
So gratefu', back your news I send you,
And pray, a' guid things may attend you!

ELLISLAND, *Monday Morning*, 1790.

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON,

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD.

The following note was appended to the original MS. of the Elegy:—"Now that you are over with the sirens of flattery, the harpies of corruption, and the furies of ambition—those infernal deities that, on all sides and in all parties, preside over the villainous business of politics—permit a rustic muse of your acquaintance to do her best to soothe you with a song. You knew Henderson. I have not flattered his memory."

In a letter to Dr Moore, dated February 1791, the poet says:—"The Elegy on Captain Henderson is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have passed that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of any avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living. Captain Henderson was a retired soldier, of agreeable manners and upright character, who had a lodging in Carrubber's Close, Edinburgh, and mingled with the best society of the city: he dined regularly at Fortune's Tavern, and was a member of the Capillaire Club, which was composed of all who inclined to the witty and the joyous."

"Should the poor be flatter'd?"—SHAKESPEARE.

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright;
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless heavenly light!

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie[2]
Haurl[3] thee hame to his black smiddie,*
O'er hurcheon[4] hides,
And like stock-fish[5] come o'er his studdie[6]
Wi' thy auld sides!

---

1 At all more sober.
2 Rope of wythes.
3 Drag.
4 Hedgehog.
5 Dried fish.
6 Anvil.

* *Smiddie*, a blacksmith's shop—hence the appropriateness of its use in the present instance.

He 's gane! he 's gane! he 's frae us torn!
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel shall mourn.
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exiled!

Ye hills! near neibors o' the starns,[1]
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns,[2]
Where Echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers!

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens![3]
Ye hazelly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin' down your glens,
Wi' toddlin' din,*
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,[4]
Frae lin to lin!

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea;
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines, hanging bonnilie
In scented bowers;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flowers.

At dawn, when every grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at its head,
At even, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' the rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin'[5] through the glade,
Come, join my wail.

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap[6] the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling through a clud;[7]
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick[8] brood!—
He 's gane for ever.

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

---

[1] Stars. [2] Eagles. [3] Wood-pigeon knows. [4] Bounds.
[5] Hares running. [6] Crop, eat. [7] Cloud.
[8] Partridge.

* With the noise of one who goes hesitatingly or insecurely.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks[1] at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flowering clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets,[2] frae your ivy bower,
In some auld tree or eldritch[3] tower,
What time the moon, wi' silent glower,[4]
Sets up her horn,
Wail through the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife[5] morn!

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty[6] strains:
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe?
And frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep[7] a tear:
Thou, Simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flowery tresses shear
For him that 's dead!

Thou, Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear!
Thou, Winter, hurling through the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we 've lost!

Mourn him, thou Sun, great source of light!
Mourn, empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he 's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return.

O Henderson! the man—the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever?
And hast thou cross'd that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound?
Like thee, where shall I find another
The world around!

Go to your sculptured tombs, ye great
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!

---

1 Landrails. 2 Owls. 3 Haunted. 4 Stare
5 Wakening 6 Happy. 7 Catch.

But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth.

THE EPITAPH.

STOP, passenger!—my story 's brief,
And truth I shall relate, man;
I tell nae common tale o' grief—
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at Fortune's door, man,
A look of pity hither cast—
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man,
There moulders here a gallant heart—
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man,
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise—
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca'
Wad life itself resign, man,
The sympathetic tear maun fa'—
For Matthew was a kind man!

If thou art stanch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man,
This was a kinsman o' thy ain—
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man,
This was thy billie, dam, and sire—
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingin' sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man,
May dool and sorrow be his lot!—
For Matthew was a rare man.

TAM O' SHANTER:

A TALE.

Captain Grose, in the introduction to his "Antiquities of Scotland," says, "To my *ingenious* friend, Mr Robert Burns, I have been seriously obligated; he was not only at the pains of making out what was most worthy of notice in

Ayrshire, the country honoured by his birth, but he also wrote, expressly for this work, the *pretty tale* annexed to Alloway Church." This pretty tale was "Tam o' Shanter," certainly the most popular of all our poet's works. In a letter to Captain Grose, No. CCXXVII. of the General Correspondence, Burns gives the legend which formed the groundwork of the poem:—"On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirkyard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards farther on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning. Though he was terrified with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, — he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirkyard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old Gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer, stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed tradition does not say, but that the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, 'Weel luppen, Maggie wi' the short sark!' and, recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally-known fact that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tailless condition of the vigorous steed was, to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers not to stay too late in Ayr markets."

Douglas Grahame of Shanter, a farmer on the Carrick shore, who was in reality the drunken, careless being the poet depicts him, became the hero of the legend, and several ludicrous stories current about him were woven into it with admirable skill. It is reported of him that one market day being in Ayr he had tied his mare by the bridle to a ring at the door of a public house, and while he was making himself happy with some cronies inside, the idle boys of the neighbourhood pulled all the hair out of the mare's tail. This was not noticed until the following morning, when, becoming bewildered as to the cause of the accident, he could only refer it to the agency of witchcraft. It is further related of Grahame that when a debauch had been prolonged until the dread of the "sulky sullen dame" at home rose up before him, he would frequently continue drinking rather than face her, even although delay would add to the terrors of the inevitable home-going.

The poem was composed in one day in the winter of 1790. Mrs Burns informed Cromek that the poet had lingered longer by the river side than his wont, and that, taking the children with her, she went out to join him, but perceiving that her presence was an interruption to him, she lingered behind him: her attention was attracted by his wild gesticulations and ungovernable mirth, while he was reciting the passages of the poem as they arose in his mind.

"Of brownyis and of bogilis full is this buke."—GAWIN DOUGLAS.

WHEN chapman billies[1] leave the street,
And drouthy[2] neibors neibors meet,

[1] Fellows. [2] Thirsty.

As market days are wearin' late,
And folk begin to tak the gate;[1]
While we sit bousing at the nappy,[2]
And gettin' fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,[3]
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses
For honest men and bonny lasses.)

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,[4]
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;[5]
That frae November till October,
Ae market day thou wasna sober;
That ilka melder,* wi' the miller
Thou sat as lang as thou hadst siller;[6]
That every naig[7] was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton† Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou wouldst be found deep drown'd in Doon!
Or catch'd wi' warlocks i' the mirk,[8]
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars[9] me greet
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale:—Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco[10] right,
Fast by an ingle,[11] bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats,[12] that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy[13] crony;

---

[1] Road. [2] Ale. [3] Breaches in hedges or walls.
[4] A worthless fellow. [5] A talker of nonsense, a boaster, and a drunken fool.
[6] Money. [7] Horse. [8] Dark [9] Makes.
[10] Unusually. [11] Fire. [12] Foaming ale. [13] Thirsty.

* Any quantity of corn sent to the mill is called a melder.

† The village where a parish church is situated is usually called the Kirkton (Kirk-town) in Scotland. A certain Jean Kennedy, who kept a reputable public house in the village of Kirkoswald, is here alluded to.

Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither—
They had been fou for weeks thegither!
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter.
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious;
The Souter tauld his queerest stories,
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair[1] and rustle—
Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel amang the nappy!
As bees flee hame wi' lades[2] o' treasure.
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed!
Or like the snowfall in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether[3] time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic[4] a night he taks the road in
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit[5] on through dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning[6] o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowering[7] round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles[8] catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets[9] nightly cry.

---

1 Roar. 2 Loads. 3 Tie up. 4 Such.
5 Rode with careless speed. 6 Humming 7 Staring.
8 Spirits. 9 Ghosts and owls.

By this time he was 'cross the foord,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd ;[1]
And past the birks and meikle stane
Whare drunken Charlie brak 's neck-bane :
And through the whins, and by the cairn[2]
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersel.
Before him Doon pours a' his floods ;
The doubling storm roars through the woods
The lightnings flash frae pole to pole ;
Near and more near the thunders roll ;
When, glimmering through the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze ;
Through ilka bore[3] the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn !
What dangers thou canst mak us scorn !
Wi' tippenny,[4] we fear nae evil ;
Wi' usquebae,[5] we 'll face the devil !—
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,[6]
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.[7]
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventured forward on the light ;
And, wow ! Tam saw an unco sight !
Warlocks and witches in a dance ;
Nae cotillon brent-new[8] frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle i' their heels :
At winnock-bunker,[9] i' the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast ;
A towzie tyke,[10] black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge ;
He screw'd the pipes, and gart[11] them skirl,[12]
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.[13]
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses ;
And by some devilish cantrip[14] slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns ;[15]
Twa span-lang, wee,[16] unchristen'd bairns ;
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab[17] did gape ;
Five tomahawks, wi' bluid red-rusted ;
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted ;

---

1 Pedlar was smothered. 2 Stone heap. 3 Crevice.
4 Twopenny ale. 5 Whisky. 6 The ale so wrought in Tammie's head
7 A small coin. 8 Brand-new. 9 Window seat.
10 A rough dog. 11 Made. 12 Scream 13 Vibrate.
14 Spell. 15 Irons. 16 Small. 17 Mouth.

A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The gray hairs yet stack to the heft:[1]
. . . . . *
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glower'd,[2] amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,[3]
And coost[4] her duddies[5] to the wark,
And linket[6] at it in her sark.[7]

Now Tam! O Tam! had thae been queans,[8]
A' plump and strappin' in their teens,
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,[9]
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linen! †
Thir breeks[10] o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gien them aff my hurdies,[11]
For ae blink[12] o' the bonny burdies![13]

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie[14] hags, wad spean[15] a foal,
Lowpin' and flingin' on a cummock,[16]
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kenn'd[17] what was what fu' brawlie,[18]
"There was ae winsome wench and walie,"[19] ‡
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonny boat,

---

1 Handle. 2 Stared. 3 Till each old beldam smoked with sweat
4 Stript. 5 Clothes. 6 Tripped. 7 Shirt.
8 Young girls. 9 Greasy flannel. 10 These breeches.
11 Hams. 12 Look. 13 Lasses. 14 Gallows-worthy.
15 Wean. 16 Jumping and capering on a staff. 17 Knew.
18 Full well. 19 A hearty girl and jolly.

* The following four lines were, in the original MS., in this place:—

Three lawyers' tongues turn'd inside out,
Wi' lies seam'd like a beggar's clout: [1]
And priests' hearts, rotten, black as muck,
Lay stinking, vile, in every neuk.[2]

The poet omitted them at the suggestion of Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee.

† The manufacturers' term for a fine linen woven in a reed of 1700 divisions.—CROMEK.

‡ Allan Ramsay.

---

1 Rags. 2 Corner

And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear.)
Her cutty sark,[1] o' Paisley harn,
That, while a lassie,[2] she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.[3]

Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft[4] for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,)
Wad ever graced a dance o' witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,[5]
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,[6]
(A souple jade[7] she was, and strang,[8])
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd;
Even Satan glower'd, and fidged fu' fain,
And hotch'd[9] and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne[10] anither,
Tam tint[11] his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant a' was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.
As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,[12]
When plundering herds assail their byke,[13]
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch[14] screech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'lt get thy fairin'![15]
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin'!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin'!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the keystane* of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross;

---

[1] Short shirt. [2] Girl. [3] Proud of it. [4] Bought.
[5] Lower. [6] Jumped and kicked. [7] Girl.
[8] Strong. [9] Hitched. [10] Then. [11] Lost.
[12] Fuss. [13] Hive. [14] Unearthly. [15] Deserts.

* It is a well-known fact that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller that, when he falls in with *bogles*, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—*B.*

Tam roars out, "Weel done, cutty-sark!"
And in an instant a' was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied,
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch screech and hollow.
—*Tam o' Shanter*, page 192

But ere the keystane she could make,
The fient[1] a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;[2]
But little wist[3] she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk[4] man and mother's son, take heed:
Whane'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys owre dear—
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

ON THE BIRTH OF A POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY DISTRESS.

The mother of the child was Miss Susan Dunlop, daughter of Burns's friend Mrs Dunlop. She had married a French gentleman of birth and fortune, named Henri, who died prematurely. Some time afterwards, Mrs Henri went to the south of France, where she died, leaving her child exposed to all the dangers of the revolutionary excesses. He was carefully tended by an old domestic of the family's, and restored to his friends when the tranquillity of the country was secured.

SWEET floweret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer,
What heart o' stane would thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirples[5] o'er the lea,
Chill on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the sheltering tree
Should shield thee from the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving shower,
The bitter frost and snaw!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,[6]
Protect and guard the mother-plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

1 Ne'er. 2 Design. 3 Knew.
4 Each. 5 Moves slowly. 6 Pangs.

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer-morn:
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscathed by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

ELEGY ON MISS BURNET OF MONBODDO.

Miss Burnet was the daughter of the accomplished and eccentric Lord Monboddo. She is alluded to in the "Address to Edinburgh," (p. 134,)

Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine;
I see the Sire of Love on high,
And own His work indeed divine.

She was one of the most beautiful women of her time, and died of consumption in the twenty-third year of her age.

LIFE ne'er exulted in so rich a prize
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious Death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I forget?
In richest ore the brightest jewel set!
In thee, high Heaven above was truest shown,
As by His noblest work the Godhead best is known.

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye groves;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flowery shore,
Ye woodland choir that chant your idle loves,
Ye cease to charm—Eliza is no more!

Ye heathy wastes, immix'd with reedy fens;
Ye mossy streams, with sedge and rushes stored
Ye rugged cliffs, o'erhanging dreary glens,
To you I fly, ye with my soul accord.

Princes, whose cumbrous pride was all their worth,
Shall venal lays their pompous exit hail?
And thou, sweet excellence! forsake our earth,
And not a Muse in honest grief bewail?

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's pride,
And virtue's light, that beams beyond the spheres;
But, like the sun eclipsed at morning tide,
Thou left'st us darkling in a world of tears.

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care;
So deckt the woodbine sweet yon aged tree;
So from it ravish'd, leaves it bleak and bare.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS, ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

This poem is said to have been written at the instigation of Lady Winifred Maxwell Constable, daughter of William Maxwell, Earl of Nithsdale, who rewarded him with a present of a valuable snuff-box, having a portrait of Queen Mary on the lid. In a letter to Graham of Fintray, enclosing a copy of "The Lament," the poet says:—"Whether it is that the story of our Mary Queen of Scots has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have, in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not, but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my Muse for a good while past."

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now lav'rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bower,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis wild, wi' mony a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn 's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae;
The meanest hind in fair Scotland
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang!

I was the queen o' bonny France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly rase I in the morn,
As blithe lay down at e'en:
And I 'm the sovereign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never-ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman!—
My sister and my fae,
Grim Vengeance yet shall whet a sword
That through thy soul shall gae!
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor the balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying ee.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine!
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That ne'er wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee:
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

Oh! soon to me may summer suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair to me the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flowers that deck the spring
Bloom on my peaceful grave!

LAMENT FOR JAMES, EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

The early death of the Earl of Glencairn robbed the poet of an intelligent friend and patron. Burns enclosed the "Lament" in a letter to Lady Elizabeth Cunningham, the sister of the earl, from which we quote the following:—"My heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his lordship's memory were not the 'mockery of woe.' Nor shall my gratitude perish with me! If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn."

THE wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That waved o'er Lugar's winding stream:
Beneath a craigy steep, a bard.
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mouldering down with years;
His locks were bleachèd white with time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears;
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tuned his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting through their caves,
To Echo bore the notes alang:—

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing
The reliques of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the agèd year!

A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye 'll charm the ear and ee;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

"I am a bending agèd tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hold of earth is gane:
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ithers plant them in my room.

"I 've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unrelieved,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

"And last (the sum of a' my griefs!)
My noble master lies in clay;
The flower amang our barons bold,
His country's pride—his country's stay!
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my agèd ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair;
Awake! resound thy latest lay—
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the bard
Thou brought from Fortune's mirkest gloom

"In Poverty's low barren vale
Thick mists, obscure, involved me round;
Though oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found;
Thou found'st me, like the morning sun,
That melts the fogs in limpid air—
The friendless bard and rustic song
Became alike thy fostering care.

"Oh! why has worth so short a date,
While villains ripen gray with time?
Must thou, the noble, generous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime!

Why did I live to see that day?
A day to me so full of woe!—
Oh! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen:
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I 'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

LINES

SENT TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD, BART., OF WHITEFOORD, WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

THOU, who thy honour as thy God reverest,
Who, save thy mind's reproach, nought earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive-offering I impart,
The tearful tribute of a broken heart.
The friend thou valued'st, I the patron loved;
His worth, his honour, all the world approved.
We 'll mourn till we too go as he has gone,
And tread the dreary path to that dark world unknown.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH BAYS.

The Earl of Buchan invited the poet to be present at the coronation of Thomson's bust on Ednam Hill. He could not attend, but sent the following "Address" instead:—

WHILE virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Æolian strains between:

While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade:

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his agèd head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty fed:

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the year!
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son!

VERSES

TO JOHN MAXWELL OF TERRAUGHTY, ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

John Maxwell, the subject of the following lines, was an eccentric but able man. He had a great admiration for the poet—not that he cared much for his poetry, but on account of his knowledge of human nature, and his striking conversational powers. He outlived the poet twenty years.

HEALTH to the Maxwells' veteran chief!
Health, aye unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspired, I turn'd Fate's sybil leaf
This natal morn;
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,[1]
Scarce quite half worn.

This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven
(The second sight, ye ken, is given
To ilka[2] poet)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies[3] view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May Desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoure![4]

But for thy friends, and they are mony,
Baith honest men and lasses bonny,
May couthie[5] Fortune, kind and canny,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blithe and e'enings funny,
Bless them and thee!

Fareweel, auld birkie![6] Lord be near ye,
And then the deil he daurna steer ye:

---

1 Proof.
2 Every.
3 Bucks.
4 Dust.
5 Loving.
6 A lively fellow

Your friends aye love, your faes aye fear ye;
For me, shame fa' me,
If neist my heart I dinna wear ye,
While BURNS they ca' me!

THE VOWELS:

A TALE.

'TWAS where the birch and sounding thong are plied,
The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
Where Ignorance her darkening vapour throws,
And Cruelty directs the thickening blows;
Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,
His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling Vowels to account.

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But, ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
And flagrant from the scourge, he grunted *ai!*
Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous race
The jostling tears ran down his honest face!
That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The pedant stifles keen the Roman sound
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
And next, the title following close behind,
He to the nameless ghastly wretch assign'd.

The cobweb'd Gothic dome resounded Y!
In sullen vengeance, I disdain'd reply:
The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
The inquisitor of Spain the most expert,
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art:
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering, U
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!

As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptized him *eu*, and kick'd him from his sight.

ADAM A——'S PRAYER.

The circumstances under which the following lines were written were as follows:—The servant of a Mauchline innkeeper having been too indulgent to one of her master's customers, a number of reckless young fellows, among whom was Adam A——, an ill-made little fellow, made her "ride the stang,"—that is, placed her astride a wooden pole, and carried her through the streets. An action being raised against the offenders, Adam A—— absconded. While skulking about, Burns met him, and suggested that he needed some one to pray for him: "Just do't yoursel. Burns; I know no one so fit," Adam replied. Adam A——'s Prayer was the result.

GUDE pity me, because I'm little,
For though I am an elf o' mettle,
And can, like ony wabster's[1] shuttle,
Jink[2] there or here;
Yet, scarce as lang 's a guid kail whittle,[3]
I'm unco queer.

And now thou kens our woefu' case,
For Geordie's jurr* we're in disgrace,
Because we've stang'd her through the place,
And hurt her spleuchan,
For which we daurna show our face
Within the clachan.[4]

And now we're dern'd[5] in glens and hollows,
And hunted, as was William Wallace,
Wi' constables, those blackguard fallows,
And sodgers baith;
But gude preserve us frae the gallows,
That shamefu' death!

Auld, grim, black-bearded Geordie's sel,
Oh, shake him o'er the mouth o' hell,
There let him hing, and roar, and yell,
Wi' hideous din,
And if he offers to rebel,
Just heave[6] him in.

When Death comes in, wi' glimmering blink,
And tips auld drunken Nanse† the wink,
May Hornie gie her doup a clink
Ahint his yett,[7]
And fill her up wi' brimstone drink,
Red, reeking, het.

There 's Jockie and the haveril Jenny,‡
Some devils seize them in a hurry,

1 Weaver's. 2 Dodge. 3 Knife. 4 Village.
5 Hidden. 6 Pitch. 7 Gate.

* "Jurr" is in the west of Scotland a colloquial term for "journeyman," and is often applied to designate a servant of either sex.
† Geordie's wife. ‡ Geordie's son and daughter

And waff them in the infernal wherry
Straught through the lake,
And gie their hides a noble curry,
Wi' oil of aik.

As for the jurr, poor worthless body,
She 's got mischief enough already;
Wi' stangèd hips, and buttocks bluidy,
She 's suffer'd sair;
But may she wintle in a woodie,[1]
If she whore mair.

VERSES TO JOHN RANKINE.*

AE day, as Death, that grusome carl,
Was driving to the tither warl'
A mixtie-maxtie, motley squad,
And mony a guilt-bespotted lad;
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,
From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that wintles[2] in a halter.
Ashamed himsel to see the wretches,
He mutters, glowerin'[3] at the bitches,
"By God, I 'll not be seen behint them,
Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them,
Without, at least, ae honest man,
To grace this damn'd infernal clan."
By Adamhill a glance he threw,
"Lord God!" quoth he, "I have it now;
There 's just the man I want, i'faith!"
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.

ON SENSIBILITY.

TO MY DEAR AND MUCH-HONOURED FRIEND, MRS DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

SENSIBILITY, how charming,
Thou, my friend, canst truly tell;
But distress, with horrors arming,
Thou hast also known too well!

Fairest flower, behold the lily,
Blooming in the sunny ray:

---

[1] Struggle in a halter. [2] Struggles. [3] Staring.

* John Rankine of Adamhill, the "rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine" of the Epistle.

Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the woodlark charm the forest,
Telling o'er his little joys;
Hapless bird! a prey the surest,
To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure
Finer feelings can bestow;
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

LINES ON FERGUSSON.

The following lines were inscribed by Burns on a blank leaf of a copy of the periodical publication entitled the *World*, from which they have been copied:—

Ill-fated genius! Heaven-taught Fergusson!
What heart that feels and will not yield a tear,
To think life's sun did set ere well begun
To shed its influence on thy bright career.
Oh, why should truest worth and genius pine
Beneath the iron grasp of Want and Woe,
While titled knaves and idiot greatness shine
In all the splendour Fortune can bestow!

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN,

AN OCCASIONAL ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT.

While Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
The fate of empires and the fall of kings;
While quacks of state must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp the rights of man;
Amid this mighty fuss, just let me mention,
The rights of woman merit some attention.

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connexion,
One sacred right of woman is, protection.
The tender flower that lifts its head, elate,
Helpless, must fall before the blasts of fate,
Sunk on the earth, defaced its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending storm.

Our second right—but needless here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate 's the fashion;
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He 'd die before he 'd wrong it—'tis decorum.

There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough, rude man, had naughty ways;
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a riot,
Nay, even thus invade a lady's quiet!
Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times are fled;
Now, well-bred men—and ye are all well bred!—
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor manners.

For right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest,
Which even the rights of kings in low prostration
Most humbly own—'tis dear, dear admiration!
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life—immortal love.
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs.
'Gainst such a host what flinty savage dares—
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms,
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions!
Let majesty your first attention summon,
Ah! *ça ira!* THE MAJESTY OF WOMAN!

ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CHILD.

The following lines were composed on the death of a daughter, which took place suddenly while the poet was absent from home:—

Oh, sweet be thy sleep in the land of the grave,
My dear little angel, for ever;
For ever—oh no! let not man be a slave,
His hopes from existence to sever.

Though cold be the clay where thou pillow'st thy head,
In the dark silent mansions of sorrow,
The spring shall return to thy low narrow bed,
Like the beam of the daystar to-morrow.

The flower-stem shall bloom like thy sweet seraph form,
Ere the spoiler had nipt thee in blossom;
When thou shrunk from the scowl of the loud winter storm,
And nestled thee close to that bosom.

Oh, still I behold thee, all lovely in death,
Reclined on the lap of thy mother,
When the tear trickled bright, when the short stifled breath,
Told how dear ye were aye to each other.

My child, thou art gone to the home of thy rest,
Where suffering no longer can harm ye,
Where the songs of the good, where the hymns of the blest,
Through an endless existence shall charm thee.

While he, thy fond parent, must sighing sojourn
Through the dire desert regions of sorrow,
O'er the hope and misfortune of being to mourn,
And sigh for his life's latest morrow.

TO A KISS.

HUMID seal of soft affections,
Tenderest pledge of future bliss,
Dearest tie of young connexions,
Love's first snowdrop, virgin kiss!

Speaking silence, dumb confession,
Passion's birth, and infant's play,
Dove-like fondness, chaste concession,
Glowing dawn of brighter day.

Sorrowing joy, adieu's last action,
When lingering lips no more must join,
What words can ever speak affection
So thrilling and sincere as thine!

SONNET

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN A MORNING WALK; WRITTEN JAN. 25 1793, THE BIRTHDAY OF THE AUTHOR.

SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain:
See, aged Winter, 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blithe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So in lone Poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek Content with light unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank Thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, Thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of Poverty and Care;
The mite high Heaven bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll share.

IMPROMPTU ON MRS RIDDEL'S BIRTHDAY.

NOVEMBER 4, 1793.

OLD Winter with his frosty beard
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferr'd—
"What have I done, of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?
My cheerless suns no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drags dreary, slow;
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English, hanging, drowning.

"Now, Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To counterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I 've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal-day!
That brilliant gift shall so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me.
"'Tis done!" says Jove; so ends my story,
And Winter once rejoiced in glory.

EPISTLE FROM ESOPUS TO MARIA.

The Esopus of this epistle was Williamson the actor; and the Maria to whom it is addressed was Mrs Riddel—"A lady," says Allan Cunningham, "whose memory will be held in grateful remembrance, not only for her having forgiven the poet for his lampoons, but for her having written a sensible, clear, heart-warm account of him when laid in the grave. Mrs Riddel was a sincere friend and admirer of Burns, who quarrelled with her on account of some fancied slight. Williamson was a member of the dramatic company which frequently visited Dumfries. He had been a frequent visitor at Mrs Riddel's. While the dramatic company were at Whitehaven, the Earl of Lonsdale committed them to prison as vagrants. Burns had no favour for the Earl of Lonsdale, and managed in the epistle to gratify his aversion to him, as well as his temporary anger with Mrs Riddel. His behaviour towards the latter was as discreditable to him as Mrs Riddel's generosity in forgiving it was worthy of her goodness and her high opinion of his better nature."

FROM those drear solitudes and frowsy cells,
Where infamy with sad repentance dwells;
Where turnkeys make the jealous mortal fast,
And deal from iron hands the spare repast;
Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
Blush at the curious stranger peeping in;
Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
Resolve to drink, nay, half to whore, no more;
Where tiny thieves, not destined yet to swing,
Beat hemp for others riper for the string:
From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date.
To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

"Alas! I feel I am no actor here!"
'Tis real hangmen real scourges bear!
Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
Will turn thy very rouge to deadly pale;
Will make thy hair, though erst from gipsy poll'd,
By barber woven, and by barber sold,
Though twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care,
Like hoary bristles to erect and stare.
The hero of the mimic scene, no more
I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar;
Or haughty chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
In Highland bonnet woo Malvina's charms;
Whilst sans-culottes stoop up the mountain high,
And steal from me Maria's prying eye.
Blest Highland bonnet! once my proudest dress,
Now prouder still, Maria's temples press.
I see her wave thy towering plumes afar,
And call each coxcomb to the wordy war;
I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,
And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze;
The crafty colonel leaves the tartan'd lines,
For other wars, where he a hero shines;
The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head;
Comes, 'mid a string of coxcombs, to display
That *veni, vidi, vici*, is his way;
The shrinking bard adown an alley skulks,
And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks:
Though there, his heresies in church and state
Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate:
Still she undaunted reels and rattles on,
And dares the public like a noontide sun.
(What scandal call'd Maria's janty stagger
The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger;
Whose spleen e'en worse than Burns's venom when
He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,—
And pours his vengeance in the burning line,
Who christen'd thus Maria's lyre divine;
The idiot strum of vanity bemused,
And even the abuse of poesy abused;
Who call'd her verse a parish workhouse, made
For motley, foundling fancies, stolen or stray'd?)

A workhouse! ha, that sound awakes my woes,
And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose!
In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
And all my frowsy couch in sorrow steep!
That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.

Why, Lonsdale, thus thy wrath on vagrants pour,
Must earth no rascal save thyself endure?
Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell,
And make a vast monopoly of hell?

Thou know'st the virtues cannot hate thee worse;
The vices also, must they club their curse?
Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all?

Maria, send me too thy griefs and cares;
In all of these sure thy Esopus shares.
As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
Who on my fair one satire's vengeance hurls?
Who calls thee pert, affected, vain coquette,
A wit in folly, and a fool in wit?
Who says that fool alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treacheries to prove it true?
Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born:
For who can write and speak as thou and I?
My periods that decipher defy,
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all reply.

MONODY ON A LADY FAMED FOR HER CAPRICE.*

How cold is that bosom which folly once fired,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd!
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tired,
How dull is that ear which to flattery so listen'd!

If sorrow and anguish their exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection removed;
How doubly severer, Eliza, thy fate,
Thou diedst unwept as thou livedst unloved.

Loves, Graces, and Virtues, I call not on you;
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a tear:
But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Eliza's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We'll roam through the forest for each idle weed;
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none e'er approach'd her but rued the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay;
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre;
There keen Indignation shall dart on her prey,
Which spurning Contempt shall redeem from his ire.

* This was another of the poet's splenetic attacks on Mrs Riddel

POEM ON PASTORAL POETRY.

This poem was found by Dr Currie among the papers of the poet, and in his own handwriting; but Gilbert Burns says, "There is some doubt of its being his." It is not perhaps one of his happiest efforts; but there can be no doubt of its authenticity.

HAIL, Poesie! thou nymph reserved!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerved
Frae common sense, or sunk ennerved
'Mang heaps o' clavers;[1]
And och! owre aft thy joes[2] hae starved
'Mid a' thy favours

Say, lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang
To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd sang
But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives
Wee Pope, the knurlin,[3] till him rives[4]
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They 're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches:
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin[5] patches
O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
And rural grace;
And wi' the far-famed Grecian share
A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan—
There 's ane; come forrit, honest Allan![*]
Thou need na jouk[6] behint the hallan,
A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tantallan,
But thou 's for ever!

Thou paints auld nature to the nines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;

---

[1] Nonsense. [2] Lovers. [3] Dwarfish.
[4] Draws. [5] Thin or gauzy. [6] Hide

[*] Allan Ramsay.

Nae gowden stream through myrtles twines,
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonny lasses bleach their claes;
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are nature's sel;
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;
Nae snap conceits—but that sweet spell
O' witchin' love;
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RIDDEL, ESQ., OF GLEN RIDDEL.*

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more!
Nor pour your descant, grating, on my soul:
Thou young-eyed Spring, gay in thy verdant stole—
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flowers, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend!
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round the untimely tomb where Riddel lies!

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe!
And soothe the Virtues weeping o'er his bier:
The Man of Worth, who has not left his peer,
Is in his narrow house, for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet.
Me, memory of my loss will only meet.

LIBERTY:

A FRAGMENT.

Writing to Mrs Dunlop from Castle-Douglas, the poet says:—"I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I passed along the road. The subject is Liberty: you know, my

* Robert Riddel, Esq., of Friars' Carse, a very worthy gentleman, and one from whom Burns had received many obligations

honoured friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it as an irregular ode for General Washington's birthday. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms, I come to Scotland thus:"—

THEE, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead,
Beneath the hallow'd turf where Wallace lies!
Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.
Is this the power in freedom's war
That wont to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
Crush'd the despot's proudest bearing:
One quench'd in darkness, like the sinking star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.

. . . . . .

His royal visage seam'd with many a scar,
That Caledonian rear'd his martial form,
Who led the tyrant-quelling war,
Where Bannockburn's ensanguined flood
Swell'd with mingling hostile blood,
Soon Edward's myriads struck with deep dismay,
And Scotia's troop of brothers win their way.
(Oh, glorious deed to bay a tyrant's band!
Oh, heavenly joy to free our native land!)
While high their mighty chief pour'd on the doubling storm.

VERSES

TO MISS GRAHAM OF FINTRY, WITH A PRESENT OF SONGS.

These verses were written by the poet on the blank side of the title-page of a copy of Thomson's "Select Scottish Songs," and the volume sent as a present to the daughter of his much-honoured and much-valued friend, Mr Graham of Fintry.

HERE, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift, though humble he who gives;
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among!
But Peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love, ecstatic, wake his seraph song!

Or Pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest Want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious Virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born Piety her sanction seals.

THE TREE OF LIBERTY.

This poem was taken from a MS. in the poet's handwriting in the possession of Mr James Duncan, Mossesfield, near Glasgow, and first printed in Mr Robert Chambers's edition of the poet's works, 1838.

HEARD ye o' the tree o' France,
I watna[1] what 's the name o 't;
Around it a' the patriots dance,
Weel Europe kens the fame o 't.
It stands where ance the Bastile stood,
A prison built by kings, man,
When Superstition's hellish brood
Kept France in leading-strings, man.

Upo' this tree there grows sic fruit,
Its virtues a' can tell, man;
It raises man aboon the brute,
It maks him ken himsel, man.
Gif ance the peasant taste a bit,
He 's greater than a lord, man,
And wi' the beggar shares a mite
Of a' he can afford, man.

This fruit is worth a' Afric's wealth,
To comfort us 'twas sent, man:
To gie the sweetest blush o' health,
And mak us a' content, man.
It clears the een, it cheers the heart,
Maks high and low guid friends, man;
And he wha acts the traitor's part
It to perdition sends, man.

My blessings aye attend the chiel[2]
Wha pitied Gallia's slaves, man,
And staw[3] a branch, spite o' the deil,
Frae yont[4] the western waves, man.
Fair Virtue water'd it wi' care,
And now she sees wi' pride, man,
How weel it buds and blossoms there,
Its branches spreading wide, man.

But vicious folk aye hate to see
The works o' Virtue thrive, man;

[1] Know not. [2] Man. [3] Stole. [4] From beyond

The courtly vermin 's bann'd the tree,
And grat[1] to see it thrive, man;
King Louis thought to cut it down,
When it was unco[2] sma', man;
For this the watchman crack'd his crown,
Cut aff his head and a', man.

A wicked crew syne,[3] on a time,
Did tak a solemn aith, man,
It ne'er should flourish to its prime,
I wat[4] they pledged their faith, man;
Awa' they gaed,[5] wi' mock parade,
Like beagles hunting game, man,
But soon grew weary o' the trade,
And wish'd they 'd been at hame, man.

For Freedom, standing by the tree,
Her sons did loudly ca', man;
She sang a sang o' liberty,
Which pleased them ane and a', man.
By her inspired, the new-born race
Soon drew the avenging steel, man;
The hirelings ran—her foes gied[6] chase,
And bang'd[7] the despot weel, man.

Let Britain boast her hardy oak,
Her poplar and her pine, man,
Auld Britain ance could crack her joke,
And o'er her neighbours shine, man.
But seek the forest round and round,
And soon 'twill be agreed, man,
That sic a tree cannot be found
'Twixt London and the Tweed, man.

Without this tree, alake, this life
Is but a vale o' woe, man;
A scene o' sorrow mix'd wi' strife,
Nae real joys we know, man.
We labour soon, we labour late,
To feed the titled knave, man;
And a' the comfort we 're to get
Is that ayont the grave, man.

Wi' plenty o' sic trees, I trow,
The warld would live in peace, man;
The sword would help to mak a plough,
The din o' war wad cease, man.
Like brethren in a common cause,
We 'd on each other smile, man;
And equal rights and equal laws
Wad gladden every isle, man.

[1] Wept. [2] Very. [3] Then. [4] Know
[5] Went. [6] Gave. [7] Beat

Wae worth the loon[1] wha wadna eat
Sic halesome dainty cheer, man;
I'd gie my shoon frae aff my feet,
To taste sic fruit, I swear, man.
Syne let us pray, auld England may
Sure plant this far-famed tree, man;
And blithe we'll sing, and hail the day
That gives us liberty, man.

TO CHLORIS.

The Chloris of the following lines, and of several songs of the poet's, was a Mrs Whelpdale, the beautiful daughter of Mr William Lorimer, farmer of Kemmis Hall, near Ellisland. Her marriage was unfortunate, for a few months after it took place she was separated from her husband, whom she did not again meet for twenty-three years.

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralising Muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lower;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower.)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store –
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious honour's part:
And, dearest gift of Heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refined of sense and taste,
With every Muse to rove:
And doubly were the poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

---

[1] Fellow.

VERSES

ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE WOODS NEAR DRUMLANRIG.

The Duke of Queensberry, who was no favourite of the poet's, and who was deservedly held in little esteem wherever his character was known, had (we quote from Mr Chambers) "stripped his domains of Drumlanrig in Dumfriesshire, and Neidpath in Peeblesshire, of all the wood fit for being cut, in order to enrich the Countess of Yarmouth, whom he supposed to be his daughter, and to whom, by a singular piece of good fortune on her part, Mr George Selwyn, the celebrated wit, also left a fortune, under the same, and probably equally mistaken, impression."

As on the banks o' wandering Nith
Ae smiling summer morn I stray'd,
And traced its bonny howes and haughs,
Where linties sang and lambkins play'd,
I sat me down upon a craig,
And drank my fill o' fancy's dream,
When, from the eddying deep below,
Uprose the genius of the stream.

Dark, like the frowning rock, his brow,
And troubled like his wintry wave,
And deep, as sughs[1] the boding wind
Amang his eaves, the sigh he gave—
"And came ye here, my son," he cried,
"To wander in my birken shade?
To muse some favourite Scottish theme,
Or sing some favourite Scottish maid!

"There was a time, it's nae lang syne,[2]
Ye might hae seen me in my pride,
When a' my banks sae bravely saw
Their woody pictures in my tide;
When hanging beech and spreading elm
Shaded my stream sae clear and cool;
And stately oaks their twisted arms
Threw broad and dark across the pool;

"When glinting through the trees appear'd
The wee white cot aboon the mill,
And peacefu' rose its ingle reek,[3]
That slowly curl'd up the hill.
But now the cot is bare and cauld,
Its branchy shelter's lost and gane,
And scarce a stinted birk is left
To shiver in the blast its lane."

"Alas!" said I, "what ruefu' chance
Has twin'd[4] ye o' your stately trees?
Has laid your rocky bosom bare?
Has stripp'd the cleeding[5] o' your braes?

---

1 Sighs. 2 Since. 3 The smoke of its fire.
4 Reft. 5 Clothing.

Was it the bitter eastern blast,
That scatters blight in early spring?
Or was 't the wil'-fire scorch'd their boughs,
Or canker-worm wi' secret sting?"

"Nae eastlin blast," the sprite replied;
"It blew na here sae fierce and fell;
And on my dry and halesome banks
Nae canker-worms get leave to dwell:
Man! cruel man!" the genius sigh'd—
As through the cliffs he sank him down—
"The worm that gnaw'd my bonny trees,
That reptile wears a ducal crown."

ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER BENEFIT NIGHT.

'We have had a brilliant theatre here this season" the poet writes to Mr Dunlop; "only, as all other business does, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country—*want of cash*. I mention our theatre merely to lug in an occasional address which I wrote for the benefit night of one of the actresses."

Still anxious to secure your partial favour,
And not less anxious, sure, this night than ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better;
So sought a poet, roosted near the skies,
Told him I came to feast my curious eyes;
Said nothing like his works was ever printed;
And last, my Prologue-business slily hinted.
"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes,
"I know your bent—these are no laughing times:
Can you—but, Miss, I own I have my fears—
Dissolve in pause and sentimental tears;
With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence,
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentance;
Paint Vengeance, as he takes his horrid stand,
Waving on high the desolating brand,
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land?"

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying?
I 'll laugh, that's poz—nay, more, the world shall know it
And so, your servant! gloomy Master Poet!
Firm as my creed, sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,
That Misery's another word for Grief;
I also think—so may I be a bride!
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak Misfortune's blasting eye:

Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
To make three guineas do the work of five:
Laugh in Misfortune's face—the bedlam witch!
Say you 'll be merry, though you can't be rich.
Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove;
Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
Measured in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
Peerest to meditate the healing leap:
Wouldst thou be cured, thou silly, moping elf,
Laugh at her follies—laugh e'en at thyself:
Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
And love a kinder—that 's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
And as we 're merry, may we still be wise!

TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL.

The poet died within a few months of writing this. But Collector Mitchell, who was a sincere friend to him, was not aware of his distress at this time.

FRIEND of the poet, tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake! alake! the meikle deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin'[1] jig and reel,
In my poor pouches!

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That one pound one I sairly want it;
If wi' the hizzie[2] down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted,[3]
I 'd bear 't in mind.

So may the auld year gang[4] out moaning
To see the new come laden, groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loaning[5]
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowning
The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye 've heard this while how I 've been licket,[6]
And by fell Death was nearly nicket;[7]

---

[1] Dancing. [2] Girl. [3] Throbbed. [4] Go.
[5] The road leading to the farm. [6] Beaten. [7] Cut off.

Grim loun! he gat me by the fecket,[1]
And sair me sheuk;
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I 've got a share o 't,
And by that life I 'm promised mair o 't.
My hale and weel I 'll tak a care o 't.
A tentier[2] way:
Then fareweel folly, hide and hair o 't,
For ance and aye!

TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER.*

My honour'd colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the poet's weal:
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel[3]
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill
And potion glasses.

Oh, what a canty[4] warld were it,
Would pain, and care, and sickness spare it;
And fortune favour worth and merit
As they deserve!
And aye a rowth,[5] roast beef and claret;
Syne[6] wha wad starve?

Dame Life, though fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker[7]
I 've found her still,
Aye wavering, like the willow-wicker,[8]
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches, like baudrons[9] by a ratton,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut[10] on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne whip! his tail ye 'll ne'er cast saut[11] on—
He 's aff like fire.

Ah, Nick! ah, Nick! it is na fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,

---

[1] Waistcoat. [2] More careful. [3] Climb. [4] Happy.
[5] Abundance. [6] Then. [7] Insecure. [8] Twig.
[9] Cat. [10] Claw. [11] Salt.

* Arentz de Peyster, colonel of the Gentlemen Volunteers of Dumfries, of which Burns was a member. He had made some kind inquiries as to the poet's health.

Bright wines and bonny lasses rare,
To put us daft;[1]
Syne weave, unseen, the spider snare
O' hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the flee aft bizzes by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks[2] wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon, heels-o'er-gowdie![3] in he gangs,
And, like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy girning[4] laugh enjoys his pangs
And murdering wrestle,
As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting[5] drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen:
The Lord preserve us frae the devil!
Amen! Amen!

TO MISS JESSY LEWARS, DUMFRIES.

WITH A PRESENT OF BOOKS.

Cunningham says:—"Miss Jessy Lewars watched over the poet and his little household during his declining days with all the affectionate reverence of a daughter. For this she has received the silent thanks of all who admire the genius of Burns, or look with sorrow on his setting sun; she has received more—the undying thanks of the poet himself; his songs to her honour, and his simple gifts of books and verse, will keep her name and fame long in the world."

THINE be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the poet's prayer—
That Fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindliest, best presage
Of future bliss, enrol thy name;
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution still aware
Of ill—but chief, man's felon snare.
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind—
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prays thy faithful friend—the Bard.

---

[1] Mad.
[2] Itches.
[3] Topsy-turvy
[4] Grinning.
[5] Drawling.

EPISTLES.

EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE.

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

John Rankine, Adamhill, near Torbolton, would seem to have merited the epithets of "rough and ready-witted," which Burns bestowed upon him. The dream which is alluded to in the epistle may be related as an instance of his caustic humour. Lord K——, it is said, was in the practice of calling all his familiar acquaintances "brutes," and sometimes "damned brutes."—"Well, ye brute, how are ye to-day, ye damned brute?" was his usual mode of salutation. Once, in company, his lordship having indulged in this rudeness more than his wont, turned to Rankine, and exclaimed, "Ye damned brute, are ye dumb? Have ye no queer, sly story to tell us?' "I have nae story," said Rankine, "but last night I had an odd dream." "Out with it, by all means," said the other. "Aweel, ye see," said Rankine, "I dreamed I was dead, and that for keeping other than good company upon earth I was damned. When I knocked at hell-door, wha should open it but the deil; he was in a rough humour, and said, 'Wha may ye be, and what's your name?' 'My name,' quoth I, 'is John Rankine, and my dwelling-place was Adamhill.' 'Gae wa' wi' ye,' quoth Satan, 'ye canna be here; ye're ane of Lord K——'s damned brutes—hell's fu' o' them already!'" This sharp rebuke, it is said, polished for the future his lordship's speech.

With reference to the circumstances alluded to in the epistle, Lockhart says:—"He was compelled, according to the then almost universal custom of rural parishes in Scotland, to do penance in church, before the congregation, in consequence of the birth of an illegitimate child: and, whatever may be thought of the propriety of such exhibitions, there can be no difference of opinion as to the culpable levity with which he describes the nature of his offence, and the still more reprehensible bitterness with which, in his epistle to Rankine, he inveighs against the clergyman, who, in rebuking him, only performed what was then a regular part of the clerical duty, and a part of it that could never have been at all agreeable to the worthy man whom he satirises under the appellation of Daddie Auld."

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale[1] o' cocks for fun and drinkin'!
There 's mony godly folks are thinkin'
Your dreams * and tricks

[1] Choice.

* A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country side.—*B*

Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
Straught to auld Nick a.

Ye hae sae mony cracks and cants,*
And in your wicked, drucken rants,[2]
Ye mak a devil o' the saunts,
And fill them fou;[3] *
And then their failings, flaws, and wants,
Are a' seen through.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, oh, dinna tear it!
Spare 't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in black!
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives 't[4] aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye 're skaithing,[5]
It 's just the blue-gown badge and claithing †
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,
Frae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

I 've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargain'd for, and mair;
Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare,
I will expect
Yon sang,‡ ye 'll sen 't wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Though, faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow[6] scarcely spread her wing
I 've play'd mysel a bonny spring,
And danced my fill!
I 'd better gaen and sair't[7] the king,
At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
And brought a paitrick[8] to the grun',
A bonny hen,
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.[9]

---

1 Stories and tricks. 2 Bouts. * Tipsy.
4 Pulls it. 5 Injuring. 6 Dare.
7 Served. 8 Partridge 9 Know.

* A minister or elder, some say Holy Willie, had called on Rankine, and had partak-n so freely of whisky-toddy as to have ended by tumbling dead-drunk on the floor.

† "The allusion here is to a privileged class of mendicants well known in Scotland by the name of 'Blue Gowns.' The order was instituted by James V of Scotland, the royal 'Gaberlunzie-Man.'"

‡ A song he had promised the author.—*B*

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit[1] it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinking they wad fash[2] me for't
But, diel-ma-care!
Somebody tells the poacher-court
The hale affair.

Some auld-used hands had ta'en a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot,
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn'd to lie;
So gat the whistle o' my groat,
And pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
And by my pouther and my hail,
And by my hen, and by her tail,
I vow and swear!
The game shall pay o'er moor and dale,
For this, neist year.

As soon's the clocking-time is by,
And the wee pouts begun to cry,
Lord, I'se hae sportin' by and by,
For my gowd guinea.
Though I should herd the buckskin kye
For't in Virginia.

Trouth, they had muckle for to blame!
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the wame
Scarce through the feathers;
And baith a yellow George to claim
And thole their blethers![3]

It pits me aye as mad's a hair;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected sir,
Your most obedient.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

David Sillar, to whom this epistle was addressed, was a native of Tarbolton, a poet and scholar. He was for many years a schoolmaster at Irvine, and was latterly a magistrate of that town. He published a volume of poems in the Scottish dialect. Gilbert Burns says with reference to this epistle:—"Among the earliest of his poems was the epistle to Davie. Robert often composed without any regular plan. When anything made a strong impression on his

[1] Stroked. [2] Trouble. [3] Nonsense.

mind, so as to rouse it to any poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in the summer of 1784, when, in the interval of harder labour, Robert and I were weeding in the garden, that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scottish poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression; but here there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging.—Robert seemed well pleased with my criticism."

January 1785

WHILE winds frae aff Ben Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing[1] us owre the ingle,[2]
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin jingle.[3]
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,[4]
I grudge a wee the great folk's gift,
That live sae bien[5] and snug:
I tent[6] less, and want less
Their roomy fire-side;
But hanker and canker
To see their cursèd pride.

It's hardly in a body's power
To keep at times frae being sour,
To see how things are shared;
How best o' chiels[7] are whiles in want,
While coofs[8] on countless thousands rant,[9]
And ken na how to wair't;[10]
But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash[11] your head,
Though we hae little gear,[12]
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:[13]
"Mair spier na, nor fear na,"[14]
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,[15]
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are crazed, and bluid is thin,

1 Hang. 2 Fire. 3 Homely west country dialect.
4 Chimney corner. 5 Comfortable. 6 Heed. 7 Men.
8 Fools. 9 Live extravagantly. 10 Spend it
11 Trouble. 12 Goods or wealth. 13 Whole and sound.
14 More ask not, nor fear not. 15 Fig.

Is doubtless great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
E'en then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

What though, like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hall?
Yet nature's charms—the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods—
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound
To see the coming year:
On braes, when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth[1] a tune:
Syne rhyme till't, we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae dune.

It's no in titles nor in rank:
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest:
It's no in making muckle mair;[2]
It's no in books; it's no in lear;[3]
To make us truly blest;
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang:
The heart aye's the part aye
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye that sic[4] as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they
Wha scarcely tent[5] us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how aft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!

[1] Whistle. [2] Much more. [3] Learning.
[4] Such. [5] Heed.

Or else, neglecting a' that 's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless and fearless
Of either heaven or hell!
Esteeming and deeming
It 's a' an idle tale!

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I here wha sit hae met wi' some,
An 's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Though losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There 's wit there, ye 'll get there,
Ye 'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flattery I detest,)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy:
And joys the very best.
There 's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover and the frien';
Ye hae your Meg,* your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

Oh, all ye powers who rule above!
O Thou, whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming through my heart
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, all-seeing,
Oh, hear my fervent prayer!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

* Sillar's flame was a lass of the name of Margaret Orr, who had charge of the children of Mrs Stewart of Stair. It was not the fortune of "Mog" to become Mrs Sillar.

All hail! ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

Oh, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin',[1] rank and file,
Amaist[2] before I ken![3]
The ready measure rins as fine
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glowerin' owre my pen.
My spaviet[4] Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he 's fairly het;
And then he 'll hilch,[5] and stilt,[6] and jimp,[7]
And rin an unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue[8] this hasty ride,
I 'll light now, and dight[9] now
His sweaty, wizen'd[10] hide.

EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD

John Lapraik was a rustic follower of the Muses. Burns describes him as that "very worthy and facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram, near Muirkirk, which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connexion as security for some persons concerned in that villainous bubble, the Ayr Bank."

April 1, 1785.

While briers and woodbines budding green,
And paitricks[11] scraichin'[12] loud at e'en,
And morning poussie[13] whiddin seen,
Inspire my Muse,
This freedom in an unknown frien'
I pray excuse.

---

[1] Dancing. [2] Almost. [3] Know. [4] Spavined.
[5] Hobble. [6] Halt. [7] Jump. [8] Repent.
[9] Wipe. [10] Withered. [11] Partridges. [12] Screaming.
[13] The hare.

On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin',*
To ca' the crack[1] and weave our stockin'
And there was muckle[2] fun and jokin',
Ye needna doubt;
At length we had a hearty yokin'[3]
At sang about.

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife:
It thirl'd the heart-strings through the breast,
A' to the life.†

I've scarce heard ought described sae weel,
What generous manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel[4]
About Muirkirk.

It pat me fidgin-fain[5] to hear't,
And sae about him there I spiert;[6]
Then a' that kent[7] him round declared
He had ingine;[8]
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That, set him to a pint of ale,
And either douce[9] or merry tale,
Or rhymes and sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches:
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, and swore an aith,[10]
Though I should pawn my pleugh and graith,[11]
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dike back,
A pint and gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first and foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle[12] fell.
Though rude and rough:

---

1 To drive the talk. 2 Much. 3 Bout. 4 Man.
5 Made me fidget with desire. 6 Inquired. 7 Knew
8 Genius or geniality. 9 Sober. 10 Oath. 11 Tackle
12 Doggerel verses.

* In former times young women were wont to meet together, each having her distaff or rock for the purpose of spinning while the song and the gossip went round.

† This song is entitled, "When I upon thy bosom lean."

Yet crooning[1] to a body's sel
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer, like by chance,
And hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet what the matter?
Whene'er my Muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic folk may cock their nose,
And say, "How can you e'er propose,
You, wha ken hardly verse frae prose,
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools;
If honest nature made you fools,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better ta'en up spades and shools,
Or knappin'-hammers.

A set o' dull, conceited hashes,[2]
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They gang in stirks,[3] and come out asses,
Plain truth to speak;
And syne[4] they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That 's a' the learning I desire;
Then, though I drudge through dub and mire
At pleugh or cart,
My Muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

Oh for a spunk o' Allan's[5] glee,
Or Fergusson's, the bauld and slee,[6]
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear[7] enough for me,
If I could get it!

Now, sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Though real friends I b'lieve are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fu',
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that 's true,
I'm on your list.

---

[1] Humming. [2] Blockheads. [3] Year-old cattle. [4] Then.
[5] Allan Ramsay. [6] Sly. [7] Learning.

I winna[1] blaw about mysel;
As ill I like my fauts to tell;
But friends and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose[2] me:
Though I maun[3] own, as mony still
As far abuse me.

There 's ae wee faut[4] they whiles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For mony a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
Maybe some ither thing they gie me,
They weel can spare.

But Mauchline race, or Mauchline fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We 'se gie ae night's discharge to Care,
If we forgather,
And hae a swap[5] o' rhymin' ware
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap,[6] we 'se gar[7] him clatter,
And kirsen[8] him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we 'll sit down and tak our whitter,[9]
To cheer our heart;
And faith, we 'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

There 's naething like the honest nappy![10]
Whar 'll[11] ye e'er see men sae happy,
Or women sonsie, saft, and sappy[12]
'Tween morn and morn,
As them wha like to taste the drappy[13]
In glass or horn!

I 've seen me dais't[14] upon a time,
I scarce could wink, or see a styme;[15]
Just ae half-mutchkin does me prime,
Aught less is little,
Then back I rattle on the rhyme,
As gleg 's a whittle![16]

Awa' ye selfish war'ly race,
Wha think that havins,[17] sense, and grace,
E'en love and friendship, should give place
To catch-the-plack![18]
I dinna[19] like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.[20]

---

1 Will not. 2 Praise. 3 Must. 4 Small fault
5 An exchange. 6 Stoup. 7 Make. 8 Christen.
9 Hearty draught. 10 Ale. 11 Where will. 12 Comely.
13 Small drop. 14 Stupid. 15 See in the least
16 As keen as a knife. 17 Decorum.
18 To seek after money. 19 Do not. 20 Talk.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers.

But, to conclude my long epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle;
Twa lines frae you would gar me fissle,[1]
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

SECOND EPISTLE TO LAPRAIK.

April 21, 1785

WHILE new-ca'd kye rowte[2] at the stake,
And pownies reek[3] in pleugh or braik,[4]
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair,[5] wi' weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing through amang the naigs
Their ten-hours' bite,
My awkward Muse sair pleads and begs
I wouldna write.

The tapetless ramfeezled hizzie,[6]
She 's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she, "Ye ken, we 've been sae busy,
This month and mair,
That, trouth, my head is grown right dizzy
And something sair."

Her dowff[7] excuses pat me mad:
"Conscience," says I, "ye thowless jad![8]
I'll write, and that a hearty blaud,[9]
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

"Shall bauld Lapraik, the king o' hearts,
Though mankind were a pack o' cartes,

---

[1] Fidget. [2] Driven cows low. [3] Smoke. [4] Harrow.
[5] Worn sore with fatigue. [6] The heedless and exhausted jade.
[7] Silly. [8] Lazy jade. [9] Quantity.

Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye 'll neglect to shaw your parts,
And thank him kindly?

Sae I gat paper in a blink,[1]
And down gaed stumpie in the ink:
Quoth I, "Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I 'll close it;
And if ye winna mak it clink,[2]
By Jove I 'll prose it!"

Sae I 've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch* that 's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether[3]
Just clean aff-loof.†

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge and carp,
Though Fortune use you hard and sharp;
Come, kittle[4] up your moorland-harp
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how Fortune waft and warp;
She 's but a bitch.

She 's gien[5] me mony a jirt and fleg,[6]
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the Lord, though I should beg
Wi' lyart pow,[7]
I 'll laugh, and sing, and shake my leg,
As lang 's I dow![8]

Now comes the sax and twentieth simmer
I 've seen the bud upo' the timmer,[9]
Still persecuted by the limmer[10]
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kimmer,[11]
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a kist to lie and sklent,‡
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame,[12]
In some bit brugh to represent
A bailie's name?

---

1 Twinkling. 2 Rhyme. 3 Nonsense. 4 Tickle.
5 Given. 6 Jerk and kick. 7 Gray head. 8 Can.
9 Tree. 10 Jade. 11 Girl. 12 Big belly.

* Hotch potch is the Scotch name for a soup made of all sorts of vegetables No other explanation could give a proper idea of the meaning of the phrase here

† Scotticism for extemporaneous.

‡ Behind a counter to lie and leer

Or is 't the paughty,[1] feudal thane,
Wi' ruffled sark and glancing cane,
Wha thinks himsel nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps and bonnets aff are ta'en,[2]
As by he walks.

O Thou wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit and sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please, adrift,
Through Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich and great,"
Damnation then would be our fate
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heaven, that 's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he!"

O mandate, glorious and divine!
The ragged followers o' the Nine,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Though here they scrape, and squeeze, and growl,
Their worthless nievefu'[3] of a soul
May in some future carcase howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes, and joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties
Each passing year!

[1] Haughty [2] Taken [3] Handful.

EPISTLE TO JOHN GOUDIE, KILMARNOCK,

ON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS ESSAYS.

John Goudie was a Kilmarnock tradesman. His essay, fully discussing the authority of the Holy Scriptures, first appeared in 1780, and a new edition in 1785. The publication of the new edition called forth the following epistle from the poet:—

O GOUDIE! terror of the Whigs,
Dread of black coats and reverend wigs,
Sour Bigotry, on her last legs,
Girnin',[1] looks back,
Wishin' the ten Egyptian plagues
Wad seize you quick.

Poor gapin', glowerin'[2] Superstition,
Waes me! she 's in a sad condition;
Fie! bring Black Jock,* her state physician,
To see her water:
Alas! there 's ground o' great suspicion
She 'll ne'er get better.

Auld Orthodoxy long did grapple,
But now she 's got an unco ripple;[3]
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel,
Nigh unto death;
See how she fetches at the thrapple,[4]
And gasps for breath!

Enthusiasm 's past redemption,
Gaen[5] in a galloping consumption,
Not a' the quacks, wi' a' their gumption,[6]
Will ever mend her.
Her feeble pulse gies strong presumption
Death soon will end her.

'Tis you and Taylor † are the chief,
Wha are to blame for this mischief;
But gin the Lord's ain folk gat leave,
A toom[7] tar-barrel
And twa red peats[8] wad send relief,
And end the quarrel.

---

1 Grinning. 2 Staring. 3 Pains in the back and loins.
4 Throat. 5 Gone. 6 Knowledge. 7 Empty.
8 Two burning peats to set fire to the tar barrel.

* The Rev. John Russell, Kilmarnock, one of the heroes of the "Twa Herds."
† Dr Taylor of Norwich.—*B.*

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM SIMPSON,

OCHILTREE.

May 1785.

William Simpson was schoolmaster of Ochiltree, a parish a few miles south of Mauchline. According to Mr Chambers, he had sent a rhymed epistle to Burns, on reading his satire of the "Twa Herds," which called forth the following beautiful epistle in reply:—

I GAT your letter, winsome[1] Willie;
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie,[2]
Though I maun say 't, I wad be silly
And unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,[3]
Your flatterin' strain.

But I 'se believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud[4] be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented[5]
On my poor Musie;
Though in sic phrasin'[6] terms ye 've penn'd it.
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,*
Should I but dare a hope to speel,
Wi' Allan or wi' Gilbertfield,†
The braes o' fame;
Or Fergusson,‡ the writer chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson, thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye E'nbrugh gentry!
The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes[7]
Wad stow'd[8] his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,[9]
As whiles they 're like to be my dead,
(O sad disease!)
I kittle[10] up my rustic reed;
It gies me ease.

---

[1] Hearty. [2] Heartily. [3] Fellow. [4] Should.
[5] Obliquely directed. [6] Flattering. [7] Cards.
[8] Stored. [9] Rent. [10] Tickle.

* A basket. When a person's wits are supposed to be a wool-gathering, he 's said to be in a creel.

† Allan Ramsay, and William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, a forgotten poet and contemporary of Ramsay's.

‡ Robert Fergusson, the poet.

Auld Coila * now may fidge fu' fain,[1]
She 's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chiels[2] wha their chanters winna hain.[3]
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measured style;
She lay like some unkenn'd-of isle
Beside New Holland,
Or where wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

Ramsay and famous Fergusson
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;[4]
Yarrow and Tweed, to mony a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
Naebody sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, and Seine,
Glide sweet in mony a tunfu' line!
But, Willie, set your fit to mine,
And cock[5] your crest,
We 'll gar[6] our streams and burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We 'll sing auld Coila's plains and fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather-bells,
Her banks and braes, her dens and dells.
Where glorious Wallace
Aft bare the gree,[7] as story tells,
Frae southron billies.

At Wallace' name what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,[8]
Or glorious died.

Oh, sweet are Coila's haughs[9] and woods,
When lintwhites chant amang the buds,
And jinkin'[10] hares, in amorous whids,†
Their loves enjoy,
While through the braes the cushat croods[11]
With wailfu' cry!

---

1 Fidget with joy. 2 Fellows. 3 Will not spare. 4 Above
5 Elevate. 6 Make. 7 Often bore the bell.
8 Their shoes red in blood. 9 Meadows. 10 Dodgin;
11 Coos.

* An application frequently applied by Burns to the district of Kyle
† A word expressive of the quick, nimble movements of the hare

Even winter bleak has charms to me,
When winds rave through the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree
Are hoary gray:
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Darkening the day!

O Nature! a' thy shows and forms,
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms
Wi' life and light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand[1] her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
And no think lang;
Oh, sweet to stray, and pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The war'ly race may drudge and drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie,[2] stretch, and strive
Let me fair Nature's face descrive,[3]
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre[4] their treasure.

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing brither!"
We 've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:[5]
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal;
May Envy wallop[6] in a tether,[7]
Black fiend, infernal!

While Highlandmen hate tolls and taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies,*
While *terra firma* on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith and practice.
In ROBERT BURNS.

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory 's no worth a preen:[8]
I had amaist forgotten clean

[1] Found. [2] Jostle, push. [3] Describe. [4] Ilum over.
[5] Too long unknown to each other. [6] Struggle. [7] Rope.
[8] Pin.

* Sheep which have died of disease; and which are understood to belong to the shepherds as their perquisites.

Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this New Light,*
'Bout which our herds sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans[1]
At grammar, logic, and sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gie,[2]
But spak their thoughts in plain, braid lallans,[3]
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the moon,
Just like a sark,[4] or pair of shoon,[5]
Wore by degrees, till her last roon[6]
Gaed past their viewing,
And shortly after she was done,
They gat a new one.

This pass'd for certain—undisputed:
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiels[7] gat up and wad confute it,
And ca'd it wrang;
And muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud and lang.

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,[8]
Wad threap[9] auld folk the thing misteuk;[10]
For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a neuk,[11]
And out o' sight,
And backlins[12]-comin', to the leuk[13]
She grew mair bright.

This was denied—it was affirm'd;
The herds and hirsels[14] were alarm'd;
The reverend gray-beards raved and storm'd
That beardless laddies[15]
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.[16]

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words and aiths to clours and nicks;[17]
And mony a fallow gat his licks,[18]
Wi' hearty crunt:[19]
And some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd and brunt.

---

1 Juveniles. 2 Give. 3 Lowland speech. 4 Shirt.
5 Shoes. 6 Shred. 7 Fellows. 8 Book.
9 Argue. 10 Mistook. 11 Corner. 12 Backwards
13 Look. 14 Flocks. 15 Lads. 16 Fathers
17 Blows and cuts. 18 Got a beating. 19 Dint.

* An allusion to the "Twa Herds."

This game was play'd in mony lands,
And Auld-Light caddies[1] bure sic hands
That, faith, the youngsters took the sands
Wi' nimble shanks,[2]
Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But New-Light herds gat sic a cowe,[3]
Folk thought them ruin'd stick and stowe,[4]
Till now amaist on every knowe[5]
Ye 'll find ane placed;
And some their New-Light fair avow,
Just quite barefaced.

Nae doubt the Auld-Light flocks are bleatin',
Their zealous herds are vex'd and sweatin';
Mysel, I've even seen them greetin'[6]
Wi' girnin'[7] spite,
To hear the moon sae sadly lied on,
By word and write.

But shortly they will cowe the loons![8]
Some Auld-Light herds in neibor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight,
And stay ae month amang the moons,
And see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
And when the auld moon's gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird,[9] they'll fetch it wi' them
Just i' their pouch,[10]
And when the New-Light billies[11] see them,
I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter[12]
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"
But though dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,[13]
I hope we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.[14]

THIRD EPISTLE TO JOHN LAPRAIK.

This epistle did not appear in either of the editions of his works which the poet saw through the press. It was written while in the midst of his second harvest at Mossgiel—an unfortunate one as it proved; for being both a late and a wet season, an evil conjunction on the cold wet soil, half the crops were lost.

---

1 Fellows. 2 Legs. 3 Such a fright. 4 Stump and rump
5 Hillock. 6 Crying. 7 Grinning. 8 Rascals.
9 Shred. 10 Pocket. 11 Fellows. 12 Gossip.
13 Contention. 14 Broils.

September 13, 1785.

GUID speed and furder* to you, Johnny,
Guid health, hale han's, and weather bonny;
Now when ye're nickan[1] down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' bran'y
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thrash your rigs,†
Nor kick your rickles[2] aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs and haggs[3]
Like drivin' wrack;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie too, and skelpin'[4] at it,
But bitter, daudin'[5] showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi' muckle wark,
And took my jocteleg[6] and whatt[7] it,
Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let 's sing about our noble sels;
We 'll cry nae jads[8] frae heathen hills
To help or roose[9] us,
But browster wives[10] and whisky stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship, sir, I winna quat it,
And if ye mak objections at it,
Then han' in nieve[11] some day we 'll knot[12] it,
And witness take,
And when wi' usquebae we 've wat it,
It winna break.

But if the beast and branks[13] be spared
Till kye be gaun[14] without the herd,
And a the vittel[15] in the yard,
And theekit[16] right,

---

[1] Cutting. [2] Stooks or shocks of corn. [3] Morasses.
[4] Driving at it. [5] Wind-driven. [6] Clasp-knife. [7] Cut or sharpened it.
[8] Muses. [9] Rouse. [10] Ale-house wives.
[11] Hand in fist. [12] Bind. [13] Bridle. [14] Going.
[15] Victual. [16] Thatched

* Good speed and success in furtherance to you.
† May Boreas never shake the corn in your ridges.

I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blithe and witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld and gatty,[1]
And be as canty[2]
As ye were nine year less than thretty,[3]
Sweet ane and twenty!

But stooks are cowpit[4] wi' the blast,
And now the sinn keeks[5] in the west,
Then I maun rin amang the rest,
And quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe myself in haste,
Yours, RAB THE RANTER.

EPISTLE TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH.

The Rev. John M'Math was at this time assistant to the Rev. Peter Wodrow of Torbolton. As a copy of 'Holy Willie's Prayer" accompanied the epistle, we need hardly say he was a member of the New-Light party. The bleak ungenial harvest weather is very graphically pictured in the first verse.

September 17, 1785.

WHILE at the stook the shearers[6] cower
To shun the bitter blaudin'[7] shower,
Or in gulravage rinnin' scower[8]
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My Musie, tired wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, and ban', and douce[9] black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie[10] now she's done it,
Lest they should blame her,
And rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, and rather hardy,
That I, a simple, country bardie,
Should meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Lowse hell upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces,

---

[1] Frail. [2] Happy. [3] Thirty. [4] Overturned
[5] Sun blinks. [6] Harvest people. [7] Pelting
[8] Run riotously for amusement. [9] Sedate. [10] Timorous

Their three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
Their raxin'[1] conscience,
Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
Waur nor[2] their nonsense.

There's Gawn,* misca't[3] waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honour in his breast
Than mony scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abuse 't him.
And may a bard no crack his jest
What way they 've use't him?

See him, the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
And shall his fame and honour bleed
By worthless skellums,[4]
And not a muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?[5]

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts,
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
And tell aloud,
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts,
To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, and malice fause,[6]
He 'll still disdain,
And then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, and truth,
For what?—to gie their malice skouth[7]
On some puir wight,[8]
And hunt him down, o'er right and ruth,[9]
To ruin straight.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a Muse sae mean as mine,

---

1 Stretching. 2 Worse than. 3 Misnamed.
4 Wretches. 5 Fellows. 6 False.
7 Scope. 8 Fellow 9 Mercy.

* Gavin Hamilton, Esq

Who, in her rough imperfect line,
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatise false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Though blotcht and foul wi' mony a stain,
And far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those
Who boldly daur thy cause maintain
In spite o' foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite o' undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth and merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound,
A candid liberal band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too, renown'd,
And manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are named;
Sir, in that circle you are famed;
And some, by whom your doctrine 's blamed
(Which gies you honour),
Even, sir, by them your heart 's esteem'd,
And winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
And if impertinent I 've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

AULD NEIBOR,

I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrant[1] frien'ly letter;
Though I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak sae fair,
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter
Some less maun sair.[2]

---

[1] Sagacious

[2] Must serve

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,[1]
To cheer you through the weary widdle[2]
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle[3]
Your auld gray hairs.

But Davie, lad, I 'm rede ye 're glaikit;[4]
I 'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
And gif it 's sae, ye sud be licket[5]
Until ye fyke;[6]
Sic hauns as you sud ne'er be faiket,[7]
Be haint[8] wha like.

For me, I 'm on Parnassus' brink
Rivin'[9] the words to gar[10] them clink;
Whiles dais't[11] wi' love, whiles dais't wi' drink
Wi' jads or masons;
And whiles, but aye owre late, I think
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin' clink,
The devil-haet,[12] that I sud ban,
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin',
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin';
But just the pouchie[13] put the nieve[14] in,
And while ought 's there,
Then hiltie skiltie,[15] we gae scrievin',[16]
And fash[17] nae mair

Leeze me[18] on rhyme! its aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie![19]
Though rough and raploch[20] be her measure,
She 's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you mony a shavie;[21]
But for the Muse she 'll never leave ye,
Though e'er so puir,
Na, even though limpin' wi' the spavie[22]
Frae door to door.

---

1 Elbow dodge and jerk. 2 Struggle. 3 Fondle
4 I fear you are foolish. 5 Should be beaten 6 Shrug
7 Spared 8 Saved. 9 Twisting. 10 Make
11 Stupid 12 The devil a bit. 13 Pocket. 14 Fist.
15 Helter skelter. 16 Go smoothly. 17 Trouble.
18 A term of endearment, an expression of happiness or pleasure.
19 Lass. 20 Coarse. 21 Trick. 22 Spavin

EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.

James Smith, one of Burns's earliest friends, was a merchant in Mauchline He was present at the scene in "Poosie Nansie's," which suggested "The Jolly Beggars."

> "Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
> Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
> I owe thee much."—BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the sleest,[1] paukie[2] thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,[3]
Ye surely hae some warlock breef[4]
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief[5]
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun and moon,
And every star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair of shoon[6]
Just gaun to see you;
And every ither pair that's done,
Mair ta'en I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin,[7] Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit[8] stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
On her first plan;
And in her freaks, on every feature
She's wrote, "The Man."

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie[9] noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerkit[10] up sublime
Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Some rhyme a neibor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash;
Some rhyme to court the country clash,[11]
And raise a din;[12]
For me, an aim I never fash;[13]
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot
Has fated me the russet coat,
And damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has blest me wi' a random shot
O' country wit.

---

1 Slyest. 2 Knowing. 3 Robbery. 4 Spell.
5 Proof. 6 Shoes 7 Woman. 8 Stinted
9 Yeasty. 10 Fermented. 11 Gossip. 12 Noise.
13 Trouble.

This while my notion 's ta'en a sklent,[1]
To try my fate in guid black prent;
But still, the mair I 'm that way bent,
Something cries, "Hoolie![2]
I rede[3] you, honest man, tak tent,[4]
Ye 'll shaw your folly.

"There 's ither poets much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had insured their debtors
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless tatters
Their unknown pages."

Then farewee! hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I 'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
And teach the lanely heights and howes[5]
My rustic sang.

I 'll wander on, with tentless[6] heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till Fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I 'll lay me with the inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we 're living sound and hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave Care owre side!
And large, before Enjoyment's gale,
Let 's tak the tide.

This life, sae far 's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
Where Pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-and forty 's speel'd,[7]
See, crazy, weary, joyless Eild,[8]
Wi' wrinkled face,
Comes hostin',[9] hirplin',[10] owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

---

1 Twist. 2 Beware. 3 Warn. 4 Care.
5 Hollows. 6 Aimless. 7 Climbed. 8 Age.
9 Coughing. 10 Limping.

When ance life's day draws near the gloamin'.
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
And fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
And social noise;
And fareweel, dear deluding woman!
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant is thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like schoolboys, at the expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Amon' the leaves;
And though the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flowery spot,
For which they never toil'd or swat;[1]
They drink the sweet and eat the fat
But care or pain;
And, haply, eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim some fortune chase;
Keen hope does every sinew brace;
Through fair, through foul, they urge the race,
And seize the prey:
Then cannie,[2] in some cozie[3] place,
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights![4] nae rules nor roads observin';
To right or left, eternal swervin',
They zig-zag on;
Till curst with age, obscure and starvin',
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil and straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is Fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, "Ye Powers!" and warm implore,
"Though I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her climes,

[1] Sweated. [2] Quietly. [3] Snug. [4] Fellows.

Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Aye rowth[1] o' rhymes.

"Gie dreeping roasts to country lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
And maids of honour
And yill and whisky gie to cairds,[2]
Until they sconner.[3]

"A title, Dempster* merits it;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent.;
But gie me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleased to keep me hale
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose, or muslin-kail,[4]
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the Muses dinna fail
To say the grace."

An anxious ee I never throws
Behint my lug[5] or by my nose;
I jouk[6] beneath Misfortune's blows
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to Sorrow, Care, and Prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce[7] folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compared wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a dike![8]

Nae harebrain'd, sentimental traces,
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But gravissimo, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
Nae ferly[9] though ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam[10] boys,
The rattling squad:

---

1 Abundance. 2 Tinkers. 3 Are nauseated.
4 Broth made without meat. 5 Ear. 6 Stoop.
7 Serious. 8 Blank as a wall. 9 Wonder. 10 Reckless.

* George Dempster of Dunnichen, a parliamentary orator of the time

I see you upward cast your eyes—
Ye ken the road.

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I 'll scarce gang ony where—
Then, Jamie, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

EPISTLE TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.,

RECOMMENDING A BOY.

Gavin Hamilton, solicitor in Mauchline, was a warm and generous friend of the poet's, a New-Light partisan who had suffered from Auld-Light persecutions—a fact which did not tend to lessen Burns's respect for him. With reference to the Master Tootie of this epistle, Cromek tells us, "He lived in Mauchline, and dealt in cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age, and so bring a higher price."

Mossgaville, *May* 3, 1786

I HOLD it, sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
And wad hae done't aff han' :[1]
But lest he learn the callan[2] tricks,
As, faith, I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,*
And tellin' lies about them :
As lieve[3] then, I 'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted other where.

Although I say 't, he 's gleg[4] enough,
And 'bout a house that 's rude and rough,
The boy might learn to swear ;
But then wi' you he 'll be sae taught,
And get sic fair example straught,
I haena ony fear.
Ye 'll catechise him every quirk,
And shore[5] him weel wi' hell ;
And gar[6] him follow to the kirk—
Aye when ye gang yoursel.

---

[1] Off hand. [2] Boy. [3] More willingly
[4] Sharp. [5] Threaten. [6] Make.

* See introduction to this epistle.

If ye then, maun be then
Frae hame this comin' Friday;
Then please, sir, to lea'e, sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honour I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the warld's worm;[1]
To try to get the twa to gree,
And name the airles[2] and the fee,
In legal mode and form:
I ken he weel a sneck can draw,[3]
When simple bodies let him;
And if a devil be at a',
In faith he 's sure to get him.
To phrase you, and praise you,
Ye ken your laureate scorns:
The prayer still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

POETICAL INVITATION TO MR JOHN KENNEDY.

This rhymed epistle was accompanied by a prose letter, and a copy of the "Cotter's Saturday Night." Kennedy had interested himself greatly in the success of the Kilmarnock edition of the poems. He was afterwards factor to the Marquis of Breadalbane.

Now Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchline corse,[4]
Lord, man, there 's lasses there wad force
A hermit's fancy;
And down the gate, in faith they 're worse,
And mair unchancy.

But, as I 'm sayin', please step to Dow's,
And taste sic gear as Johnnie brews,
Till some bit callant[5] bring me news
That you are there;
And if we dinna haud a bouze
I 'se ne'er drink mair.

It 's no I like to sit and swallow,
Then like a swine to puke and wallow;
But gie me just a true good fallow,
Wi' right ingine,[6]
And spunkie,[7] ance to make us mellow,
And then we 'll shine.

---

1 Avaricious creature.
2 Earnest money.
3 Can take advantage.
4 Mauchline market cross.
5 Boy.
6 Genius or temperament
7 Whisky is meant.

Now, if ye're ane o' warld's folk,
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak,
And sklent[1] on poverty their joke
Wi' bitter sneer,
Wi' you no friendship will I troke,[2]
Nor cheap nor dear.

But if, as I 'm informèd weel,
Ye hate, as ill 's the very deil,
The flinty heart that canna feel—
Come, sir, here 's tae you!
Hae, there 's my haun', I wiss you weel,
And guid be wi' you.

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

This epistle was addressed to Andrew Aiken, the son of his old friend Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr. Andrew Aiken afterwards earned distinction in the service of his country.

May 1786

I LANG hae thought, my youthfu' friend,
A something to have sent you,
Though it should serve nae other end
Than just a kind memento;
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world fu' soon, my lad,
And, Andrew dear, believe me,
You 'll find mankind an unco squad,[3]
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
Even when your end 's attain'd;
And a' your views may come to nought,
Where every nerve is strain'd.

I 'll no say men are villains a';
The real, harden'd, wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricted:
But, och! mankind are unco[4] weak,
And little to be trusted;
If self the wavering balance shake,
It 's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife,
Their fate we shouldna censure,
For still the important end of life
They equally may answer;

[1] Throw. [2] Exchange. [3] Queer lot. [4] Very

A man may hae an honest heart,
Though poortith[1] hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neibor's part,
Yet hae na cash to spare him.

Aye free, aff han'[2] your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;[3]
But still keep something to yoursel
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel, as weel 's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek[4] through every other man,
Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt the illicit rove,
Though naething should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile
Assiduous wait upon her;
And gather gear[5] by every wile
That 's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being independent.

The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your honour grip,
Let that aye be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere
Must sure become the creature;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And even the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An atheist laugh 's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

---

[1] Poverty
[2] Off hand
[3] Boon companion
[4] To look pryingly.
[5] Wealth.

When ranting round in Pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driven,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heaven
Is sure a noble anchor!

Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
Still daily to grow wiser:
And may you better reck the rede
Than ever did th' adviser!

EPISTLE TO MR M'ADAM OF CRAIGENGILLAN.

The following was written on receiving a letter, congratulating him on his poetic efforts, from Mr M'Adam:—

SIR, o'er a gill I gat your card,
I trow[1] it made me proud;
"See wha taks notice o' the bard!"
I lap[2] and cried fu' loud,

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky[3] million;
I'll cock my nose aboon them a'—
I'm roos'd[4] by Craigengillan!

'Twas noble, sir; 'twas like yourse,
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile, ye ken fu' well,
Is aye a blest infection.

Though by his * banes wha in a tub
Match'd Macedonian Sandy! †
On my ain legs, through dirt and dub,
I independent stand aye.

And when those legs to guid warm kail,[5]
Wi' welcome canna bear me
A lee dike-side,[6] a sybow[7] tail,
And barley scone[8] shall cheer me.

---

[1] Vow. [2] Leaped. [3] Silly. [4] Praised
[5] Broth. [6] A shady wall-side. [7] The young onion [8] Cake

* Diogenes. † Alexander the Great

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' mony flowery simmers!
And bless your bonny lasses baith—
I 'm tauld they 're lo'esome kimmers![1]

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry!
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

EPISTLE TO MAJOR LOGAN.

Major Logan, a retired military officer, lived at Park House, near Ayr, with his mother and sister—the latter the Miss Logan to whom Burns addressed some verses, with a present of Beattie's poems. The major was a man after Burns's own heart, a capital companion, abounding in humorous sallies, and a first-rate violinist, well-known to, and much in favour with, the celebrated Neil Gow

HAIL, thairm[2]-inspirin', rattlin' Willie!
Though Fortune's road be rough and hilly
To every fiddling, rhyming billie,
We never heed,
But tak it like the unback'd filly,
Proud o' her speed.

When idly goavan[3] whiles we saunter,
Yirr, Fancy barks, awa' we canter,
Up hill, down brae, till some mischanter,[4]
Some black bog-hole,
Arrests us, then the scaith and banter
We 're forced to thole.[5]

Hale be your hearn! hale be your fiddle!
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,[6]*
To cheer you through the weary widdle[7]
O' this wild warl',
Until you on a cummock driddle[8]
A gray-hair'd carl.

Come wealth, come poortith,[9] late or soon,
Heaven send your heart-strings aye in tune,
And screw your temper-pins aboon,
A fifth or mair,
The melancholious, lazy croon[10]
O' cankrie care!

May still your life from day to day
Nae *lente largo* in the play,

---

1 Heart-enticing creatures. 2 Fiddle-string. 3 Walking aimlessly
4 Mishap. 5 Bear. 6 Elbow dodge and jerk. 7 Struggle
8 Until you hobble on a staff. 9 Poverty. 10 Drone

* These two lines also occur in the Second Epistle to Davie.

But *allegretto forte* gay
Harmonious flow:
A sweeping, kindling, bauld strathspey—
Encore! Bravo!

A blessing on the cheery gang
Wha dearly like a jig or sang,
And never think o' right and wrang
By square and rule,
But as the clegs [1] o' feeling stang
Are wise or fool!

My hand-waled [2] curse keep hard in chase
The harpy, hoodock,[3] purse-proud race.
Wha count on poortith as disgrace—
Their tuneless hearts!
May fireside discords jar a base
To a' their parts!

But come, your hand, my careless brither—
I' th' ither warl', if there 's anither—
And that there is I 've little swither [4]
About the matter—
We cheek for chow [5] shall jog thegither.
I 'se ne'er bid better.

We 've faults and failings—granted clearly,
We 're frail backsliding mortals merely,
Eve's bonny squad, priests wyte [6] them sheerly,[7]
For our grand fa';
But still—but still—I like them dearly—
God bless them a'!

Ochon! for poor Castalian drinkers,
When they fa' foul o' earthly jinkers,[8]
The witching, cursed, delicious blinkers [9]
Hae put me hyte,[10]
And gart me weet my waukrife winkers,[11]
Wi girnin' [12] spite.

But by yon moon!—and that 's high swearin'—
And every star within my hearin'!
And by her een wha was a dear ane! *
I 'll ne'er forget;
I hope to gie the jads [13] a clearin'
In fair play yet.

---

[1] Gadflies. [2] Chosen [3] Money-loving. [4] Doubt.
[5] Jole. [6] Blame. [7] Sorely. [8] Sprightly girls
[9] Pretty girls. [10] Mad. [11] Sleepy eyelids. [12] Grinning.
[13] Lasses.

* An allusion to the unfortunate termination of his courtship with Jean Armour

My loss I mourn, but not repent it,
I'll seek my pursie whare I tint[1] it,
Ance to the Indies I were wonted,
Some cantrip[2] hour,
By some sweet elf I'll yet be dinted,
Then, *Vive l'amour!*

Faites mes baisemains respectueuses.
To sentimental sister Susie,
And honest Lucky; no to roose[3] ye,
Ye may be proud,
That sic a couple Fate allows ye
To grace your blood.

Nae mair at present can I measure,
And trouth my rhymin' ware 's nae treasure:
But when in Ayr, some half-hour's leisure.
Be 't light, be 't dark,
Sir Bard will do himsel the pleasure
To call at Park.

ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, *Oct.* 30, 1786.

TO THE GUIDWIFE OF WAUCHOPE HOUSE

Mrs Scott of Wauchope, to whom this epistle was addressed, was a lady of considerable taste and talent, a writer of verse, and something of an artist. She was niece to Mrs Cockburn, authoress of a beautiful version of "The Flowers of the Forest."

GUIDWIFE,
I mind it weel, in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,[4]
And first could thrash the barn,
Or haud a yokin' at the pleugh;
And though forfoughten[5] sair enough,
Yet unco proud to learn:
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
And wi' the lave[6] ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass,
Still shearing, and clearing,
The tither stookèd raw,
Wi' claivers and haivers[7]
Wearing the day awa'.

Even then, a wish, (I mind its power,)
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast—

---

1 Lost. 2 Witching. 3 Praise. 4 Bashful
5 Fatigued. 6 Rest. 7 Idle stories and gossip.

That I, for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or beuk could make,
Or sing a sang at least.
The rough burr-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear:
No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise,
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

But still the elements o' sang,
In formless jumble, right and wrang,
Wild floated in my brain;
Till on that hairst[1] I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She roused the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonsie quean,[2]
That lighted up my jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky een,
That gart[3] my heart-strings tingle!
I firèd, inspirèd,
At every kindling keek,[4]
But bashing and dashing,
I fearèd aye to speak.

Health to the sex! ilk guid chiel[5] says,
Wi' merry dance in winter-days,
And we to share in common:
The gust o' joy, the balm of woe,
The saul o' life, the heaven below,
Is rapture-giving woman.
Ye surly sumphs,[6] who hate the name,
Be mindfu' o' your mither:
She, honest woman, may think shame
That ye 're connected with her.
Ye 're wae[7] men, ye 're nae men,
That slight the lovely dears;
To shame ye, disclaim ye,
Ilk honest birkie[8] swears.

For you, no bred to barn and byre,
Wha sweetly tune the Scottish lyre,
Thanks to you for your line:
The marled plaid ye kindly spare
By me should gratefully be ware;[9]
'Twad please me to the Nine.
I'd be mair vauntie[10] o' my hap,[11]
Douce hingin'[12] owre my curple,[13]

[1] Harvest. [2] Comely lass. [3] Made. [4] Glance.
[5] Fellow. [6] Blockheads. [7] Woeful. [8] Fellow.
[9] Worn. [10] Proud. [11] Covering.
[12] Bravely hanging. [13] Rump.

Than ony ermine ever lap,
Or proud imperial purple.
Farewee! then, lang heal then,
And plenty be your fa';
May losses and crosses
Ne'er at your hallan[1] ca'!

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM CREECH.

William Creech was the publisher of the first Edinburgh edition of the poet's works. He was the most celebrated publisher of his time in Edinburgh; and it was his good fortune to be the medium through which the works of the majority of that band of eminent men who made Edinburgh the head-quarters of literature during the latter half of the eighteenth century, passed to the world. This epistle was written during the poet's Border tour, and while Creech was in London.

AULD chuckie[2] Reekie's[3] sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel-burnisht crest,
Nae joy her bonny buskit[4] nest
Can yield ava,[5]
Her darling bird that she lo'es best,
Willie 's awa'!

O Willie was a witty wight,[6]
And had o' things an unco slight;[7]
Auld Reekie aye he keepit tight,
And trig and braw:
But now they 'll busk her like a fright—
Willie 's awa'!

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd;
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We 've lost a birkie[8] weel worth gowd—
Willie 's awa'!

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks,[9] and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding-schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock[10]-stools
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools[11]—
Willie 's awa'!

The brethren o' the Commerce-Chaumer*
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;

---

1 Porch. 2 Literally a hen. 3 Edinburgh. 4 Decorated
5 At all. 6 Fellow. 7 A great knowledge. 8 Fellow.
9 Simpletons, sluts—gowk means literally cuckoo, also a fool.
10 Toad. 11 The dust.

* The Chamber of Commerce, of which Creech was secretary. R.

He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a';
I fear they 'll now mak mony a stammer[1]—
Willie 's awa'!

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and poets pour,
And toothy critics by the score,
In bloody raw!
The adjutant o' a' the core—
Willie 's awa'!

Now worthy Gregory's * Latin face,
Tytler's † and Greenfield's ‡ modest grace;
Mackenzie,§ Stewart, ‖ sic a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' maun[2] meet some ither place—
Willie 's awa'!

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken
He cheeps[3] like some bewilder'd chicken,
Scared frae its minnie[4] and the cleckin[5]
By hoodie-craw;
Grief 's gien his heart an unco kickin'—
Willie 's awa'!

Now every sour-mou'd girnin' blellum,[6]
And Calvin's folk, are fit to fell him;
And self-conceited critic skellum[7]
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawlie[8] ward their bellum[9]—
Willie 's awa'!

Up wimpling stately Tweed I 've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
While tempests blaw;
But every joy and pleasure 's fled—
Willie 's awa'!

May I be Slander's common speech;
A text for Infamy to preach;
And lastly, streekit[10] out to bleach
In winter snaw,
When I forget thee, Willie Creech,
Though far awa'!

---

1 Stumble. 2 Must. 3 Chirps. 4 Mother.
5 Brood. 6 Talking fellow. 7 A term of contempt. 8 Easily.
9 Attacks. 10 Stretched.

* Dr James Gregory.
† Tytler of Woodhouselee.
‡ Professor of Rhetoric in the University
§ Henry Mackenzie
‖ Dugald Stewart

May never wicked Fortune touzle[1] him!
May never wicked men bamboozle[2] him!
Until a pow[3] as auld 's Methusalem
He canty[4] claw!
Then to the blessèd New Jerusalem,
Fleet wing awa'!

EPISTLE TO HUGH PARKER.

Mr Hugh Parker was a Kilmarnock merchant, and an early friend and admirer of the poet's.

In this strange land, this uncouth clime,
A land unknown to prose or rhyme;
Where words ne'er crost the Muse's heckles,*
Nor limpet[5] in poetic shackles;
A land that Prose did never view it,
Except when drunk he stachert[6] through it.
Here, ambush'd by the chimla cheek,[7]
Hid in an atmosphere of reek,[8]
I hear a wheel thrum i' the neuk,[9]
I hear it—for in vain I leuk.
The red peat gleams, a fiery kernel,
Enhusked by a fog infernal:
Here, for my wonted rhyming raptures,
I sit and count my sins by chapters;
For life and spunk like ither Christians.
I 'm dwindled down to mere existence;
Wi' nae converse but Gallowa' bodies,
Wi' nae kenn'd face but Jenny Geddes.†
Jenny, my Pegasean pride!
Dowie[10] she saunters down Nithside,
And aye a westlin leuk she throws,
While tears hap[11] o'er her auld brown nose!
Was it for this wi' canny[12] care,
Thou bure the bard through many a shire?
At howes[13] or hillocks never stumbled,
And late or early never grumbled?
Oh, had I power like inclination,
I 'd heeze[14] thee up a constellation,
To canter with the Sagitarre,
Or loup the ecliptic like a bar;

---

1 Teaze. 2 Bother. 3 Head. 4 Cheerful.
5 Limped. 6 Staggered. 7 Chimney corner. 8 Smoke.
9 Corner. 10 Sadly. 11 Hop. 12 Gentle.
13 Hollows. 14 Raise.

* A series of sharp-pointed spikes through which flax is drawn in dressing it for manufacture. Its application here is obvious.

† The poet's mare

Or turn the pole like any arrow;
Or, when auld Phœbus bids good-morrow,
Down the zodiac urge the race,
And cast dirt on his godship's face;
For I could lay my bread and kail
He 'd ne'er cast saut upo' thy tail
Wi' a' this care and a' this grief,
And sma', sma' prospect of relief,
And nought but peet-reek i' my head,
How can I write what ye can read?
Torbolton, twenty-fourth o' June,
Ye 'll find me in a better tune;
But till we meet and weet[1] our whistle,
Tak this excuse for nae epistle.

ROBERT BURNS.

FIRST EPISTLE TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY.

Robert Graham of Fintry was a Commissioner of Excise. In August 1788, Burns, in writing to Mrs Dunlop, enclosed fourteen lines of this epistle, and says, "Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following lines were the production of yesterday, as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intend inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle which I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my Excise hopes depend, Mr Graham of Fintry, one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen, not only of this country, but, I will dare to say, of this age."

WHEN Nature her great masterpiece design'd,
And framed her last, best work, the human mind,
Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
She form'd of various parts the various man.

Then first she calls the useful many forth;
Plain plodding industry and sober worth:
Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
And merchandise' whole genus take their birth:
Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
And all mechanics' many-apron'd kinds.
Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
The lead and buoy are needful to the net;
The *caput mortuum* of gross desires
Makes a material for mere knights and squires;
The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,
She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave designs,
Law, physic, politics, and deep divines:
Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
Nature, well pleased, pronounced it very good;

[1] Wet.

But ere she gave creating labour o'er,
Half-jest, she tried one curious labour more.
Some spumy, fiery, *ignis-fatuus* matter,
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;
With arch alacrity and conscious glee
(Nature may have her whim as well as we,
Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
She forms the thing, and christens it—a Poet,
Creature, though oft the prey of care and sorrow,
When blest to-day, unmindful of to-morrow.
A being form'd t' amuse his graver friends,
Admired and praised—and there the homage ends
A mortal quite unfit for Fortune's strife,
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live;
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.
Pitying the propless climber of mankind,
She cast about a standard tree to find;
And, to support his helpless woodbine state,
Attach'd him to the generous truly great,
A title, and the only one I claim,
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham

Pity the tuneful Muses' hapless train,
Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main!
Their hearts no selfish stern absorbent stuff,
That never gives—though humbly takes enough;
The little fate allows, they share as soon,
Unlike sage, proverb'd, wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
The world were blest did bliss on them depend,
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend!"
Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
Who feel by reason and who give by rule,
(Instinct 's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should*—
We own they 're prudent, but who feels they 're good?
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!

But come, ye who the godlike pleasure know,
Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
Come thou who givest with all a courtier's grace;
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
Why shrinks my soul half-blushing, half-afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?

I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful Nine—
Heavens! should the branded character be mine!
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit
Soars on the spurning wing of injured merit!
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Pity the best of words should be but wind!
So to heaven's gate the lark's shrill song ascends,
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.

In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
They dun benevolence with shameless front;
Oblige them, patronise their tinsel lays,
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again;
The piebald jacket let me patch once more;
On eighteenpence a week I've lived before.
Though, thanks to Heaven, I dare even that last shift!
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift:
That, placed by thee upon the wish'd-for height,
Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
My Muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

EPISTLE TO JAMES TAIT OF GLENCONNER.

It was Tait of Glenconner who accompanied Burns in his Nithsdale tour, and advised him respecting Ellisland. In writing to a correspondent, he says, "I am just returned from Miller's farm. My old friend, whom I took with me, was highly pleased with the bargain, and advised me to accept of it. He is the most intelligent, sensible farmer in the county, and his advice has staggered me a good deal." The persons alluded to in the poem were either Mr Tait's neighbours or friends.

AULD comrade dear, and brither sinner,
How's a' the folk about Glenconner?
How do ye this blae eastlin win',
That's like to blaw a body blin'?
For me, my faculties are frozen,
My dearest member nearly dozen'.[1]
I've sent you here, by Johnnie Simson,
Twa sage philosophers to glimpse on!
Smith, wi' his sympathetic feeling,
And Reid, to common sense appealing.
Philosophers have fought and wrangled,
And meikle Greek and Latin mangled,
Till wi' their logic-jargon tired,
And in the depth of science mired,

[1] Numbed.

To common sense they now appeal,
What wives and wabsters[1] see and feel.
But, hark ye, frien'! I charge you strictly,
Peruse them, and return them quickly,
For now I'm grown sae cursèd douce[2]
I pray and ponder butt the house;
My shins, my lane,[3] I there sit roastin',
Perusing Bunyan, Brown, and Boston;
Till by and by, if I haud on,
I'll grunt a real gospel-groan:
Already I begin to try it,
To cast my een up like a pyet,[4]
When by the gun she tumbles o'er,
Fluttering and gasping in her gore:
Sae shortly you shall see me bright,
A burning and a shining light.

My heart-warm love to guid auld Glen,
The ace and wale[5] of honest men:
When bending down wi' auld gray hairs,
Beneath the load of years and cares,
May He who made him still support him,
And views beyond the grave comfort him.
His worthy family, far and near,
God bless them a' wi' grace and gear!

My auld schoolfellow, preacher Willie,
The manly tar, my Mason Billie,
And Auchenbay, I wish him joy;
If he 's a parent, lass or boy,
May he be dad, and Meg the mither,
Just five-and-forty years thegither!
And no forgetting Wabster Charlie,
I 'm tauld he offers very fairly.
And, Lord, remember Singing Sannock,
Wi' hale-breeks,[6] saxpence, and a bannock.[7]
And next my auld acquaintance, Nancy,
Since she is fitted to her fancy;
And her kind stars hae airted[8] till her
A good chiel wi' a pickle siller.[9]
My kindest, best respects I sen' it,
To cousin Kate and sister Janet;
Tell them, frae me, wi' chiels[10] be cautious,
For, faith, they 'll aiblins[11] fin' them fashious;[12]
To grant a heart is fairly civil,
But to grant a maidenhead 's the devil.
And lastly, Jamie, for yoursel,
May guardian angels tak a spell,
And steer you seven miles south o' hell:

1 Weavers.
2 Serious.
3 By myself
4 Magpie.
5 Choice.
6 Whole breeches.
7 Oat cake.
8 Directed.
9 Some money.
10 Fellows.
11 Perhaps.
12 Troublesome.

But first, before you see heaven's glory,
May ye get mony a merry story,
Mony a laugh, and mony a drink,
And aye eneugh o' needfu' clink.[1]

Now fare ye weel, and joy be wi' you;
For my sake this I beg it o' you,
Assist poor Simson a' ye can,
Ye 'll find him just an honest man:
Sae I conclude, and quat my chanter,
Yours, saint or sinner,

ROB THE RANTER.

EPISTLE TO DR BLACKLOCK,

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER.

Dr Blacklock, the blind poet, had been educated for the Church, but in consequence of his blindness was disappointed of a charge. He kept a boarding school for young men attending college. He was much respected by the literati of the town; but, what is more important, it was his letter to Mr George Lawrie of Kilmarnock, the friend of Burns, which fired the poet's ambition, and induced his visit to Edinburgh, and the abandonment of his projected departure for the West Indies. This was no solitary instance of Dr Blacklock's judgment in discerning talent and encouraging it. Professor Walker says, "If the young men were enumerated whom he drew from obscurity, and enabled, by education, to advance themselves in life, the catalogue would naturally excite surprise."

ELLISLAND, *October* 21, 1789.

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie![2]
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?[3]
I kenn'd it still your wee bit jauntie
Wad bring you to:
Lord send you aye as weel 's I want ye,
And then ye 'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron* south!
And never drink be near his drouth![4]
He tauld mysel, by word o' mouth,
He 'd tak my letter;
I lippen'd[5] to the chiel in trouth,[6]
And bade[7] nae better.

But aiblins honest Master Heron
Had at the time some dainty fair one
To ware[8] his theologic care on,
And holy study;

---

[1] Money. [2] Proud. [3] Cheerful. [4] Thirst
[5] Trusted. [6] A petty oath. [7] Deserved. [8] Spend.

* "Heron, author of a History of Scotland published in 1800; and, among sundry other works, of a respectable life of our poet himself."—CURRIE.

And tired o' sauls to waste his lear[1] on,
E'en tried the body.

But what d' ye think, my trusty fier,[2]
I 'm turn'd a gauger[3]—Peace be here!
Parnassian queans,[4] I fear, I fear,
Ye 'll now disdain me!
And then my fifty pounds a year
Will little gain me.

Ye glaikit,[5] gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha, by Castalia's wimplin' streamies,
Lowp,[6] sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang Necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies;[7]
Ye ken yoursels my heart right proud is
I needna vaunt,[8]
But I'll sned besoms[9]—thraw saugh woodies,[10]
Before they want.

Lord, help me through this world o' care!
I 'm weary sick o 't late and air;[11]
Not but I hae a richer share
Than mony ithers;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a' men brithers?

Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man![*]
And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
A lady fair:
Wha does the utmost that he can,
Will whiles[12] do mair

But to conclude my silly rhyme,
(I 'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time,)
To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans[13] and wife;
That 's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

---

1 Learning. 2 Friend. 3 Exciseman. 4 Lasses
5 Foolish. 6 Jump. 7 Rags o' clothing. 8 Boast.
9 Cut brooms. 10 Twist willow withes. 11 Early.
12 Sometimes. 13 Children

* The male hemp—that which bears the seed. "Ye have a stalk o' carl-hemp in you," is a Scotch remark, and means that a man has more stamina in him than ordinary.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
And eke the same to honest Lucky,
I wat she is a dainty chuckie,*
As e'er tread clay!
And gratefully, my guid auld cockie,†
I 'm yours for aye.

ROBERT BURNS

SECOND EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY

ON THE CLOSE OF THE DISPUTED ELECTION BETWEEN SIR JAMES JOHNSTON AND CAPTAIN MILLER, FOR THE DUMFRIES DISTRICT OF BOROUGHS.

FINTRY, my stay in worldly strife,
Friend o' my Muse, friend o' my life,
Are ye as idle 's I am?
Come then, wi' uncouth, kintra fleg,[1]
O'er Pegasus I 'll fling my leg,
And ye shall see me try him.

I 'll sing the zeal Drumlanrig‡ bears,
Wha left the all-important cares
Of princes and their darlin's;
And, bent on winning borough touns,
Came shaking hands wi' wabster louns,
And kissing barefit carlins.[2]

Combustion through our boroughs rode,
Whistling his roaring pack abroad,
Of mad, unmuzzled lions;
As Queensberry "buff and blue" unfurl'd,
And Westerha'§ and Hopetoun hurl'd
To every Whig defiance.

But cautious Queensberry left the war,
The unmanner'd dust might soil his star;
Besides, he hated bleeding:
But left behind him heroes bright,
Heroes in Cæsarean fight,
Or Ciceronian pleading.

Oh, for a throat like huge Mons-Meg,
To muster o'er each ardent Whig
Beneath Drumlanrig's banners;

---

[1] Country kick.

[2] Barefooted women.

* Chuckie—literally, hen. Often used as a familiar term of endearment in speaking of a female.

† Cockie—literally, cock. Used in the same way as chuckie

‡ The fourth Duke of Queensberry, of infamous memory.

§ Sir James Johnston, the Tory candidate.

Heroes and heroines commix,
All in the field of politics,
To win immortal honours.

M'Murdo * and his lovely spouse
(Th' enamour'd laurels kiss her brows!)
Led on the Loves and Graces:
She won each gaping burgess' heart,
While he, all-conquering, play'd his part
Amang their wives and lasses.

Craigdarroch † led a light-arm'd corps;
Tropes, metaphors, and figures pour,
Like Hecla streaming thunder:
Glenriddel,‡ skill'd in rusty coins,
Blew up each Tory's dark designs,
And bared the treason under.

In either wing two champions fought,
Redoubted Staig,§ who set at nought
The wildest savage Tory:
And Welsh,‖ who ne'er yet flinch'd his ground,
High-waved his magnum-bonum round
With Cyclopean fury.

Miller brought up the artillery ranks,
The many-pounders of the Banks,
Resistless desolation!
While Maxwelton, that baron bold,
Mid Lawson's ¶ port entrench'd his hold,
And threaten'd worse damnation.

To these, what Tory hosts opposed;
With these, what Tory warriors closed,
Surpasses my discriving:
Squadrons extended long and large,
With furious speed rush'd to the charge,
Like raging devils driving.

What verse can sing, what prose narrate,
The butcher deeds of bloody Fate
Amid this mighty tulzie![1]
Grim Horror grinn'd—pale Terror roar'd,
As Murther at his thrapple shored,[2]
And Hell mix'd in the brulzie![3]

As Highland crags by thunder cleft,
When lightnings fire the stormy lift,[4]

---

[1] Conflict. [2] Threatened. [3] Broil. [4] Firmament.

* The Chamberlain of the Duke of Queensberry at Drumlanrig, and a friend of the poet's.
† Ferguson of Craigdarroch.
‡ Captain Riddel of Glenriddel, another friend of the poet's.
§ Provost Staig of Dumfries.
‖ Sheriff Welsh.
¶ A wine merchant in Dumfries.

Hurl down wi' crashing rattle:
As flames amang a hundred woods;
As headlong foam a hundred floods;
Such is the rage of battle!

The stubborn Tories dare to die;
As soon the rooted oaks would fly
Before th' approaching fellers:
The Whigs come on like Ocean's roar,
When all his wintry billows pour
Against the Buchan Bullers.*

Lo, from the shades of Death's deep night,
Departed Whigs enjoy the fight,
And think on former daring:
The muffled murtherer of Charles †
The Magna-Charta flag unfurls,
All deadly gules its bearing.

Nor wanting ghosts of Tory fame,
Bold Scrimgeour ‡ follows gallant Grahame, §
Auld Covenanters shiver.
(Forgive, forgive, much-wrong'd Montrose!
While death and hell ingulf thy foes,
Thou liv'st on high for ever!)

Still o'er the field the combat burns,
The Tories, Whigs, give way by turns;
But Fate the word has spoken;
For woman's wit and strength o' man,
Alas! can do but what they can—
The Tory ranks are broken!

Oh that my een were flowing burns!
My voice a lioness that mourns
Her darling cub's undoing!
That I might greet, that I might cry,
While Tories fall, while Tories fly,
And furious Whigs pursuing!

What Whig but wails the good Sir James!
Dear to his country by the names
Friend, patron, benefactor!
Not Pulteney's wealth can Pulteney save!
And Hopetoun falls, the generous brave!
And Stewart,‖ bold as Hector.

Thou, Pitt, shalt rue this overthrow;
And Thurlow growl a curse of woe:

* The "Bullers of Buchan" is an appellation given to a tremendous rocky recess on the Aberdeenshire coast, near Peterhead—having an opening to the sea, while the top is open. The sea, constantly raging in it, gives it the appearance of a pot or boiler, and hence the name.

† The executioner of Charles I. was masked.

‡ John Earl of Dundee.

§ The great Marquis of Montrose.

‖ Stewart of Hillside.

And Melville melt in wailing!
Now Fox and Sheridan rejoice!
And Burke shall sing, "O Prince, arise!
Thy power is all-prevailing."

For your poor friend, the bard, afar
He hears, and only hears, the war,
A cool spectator purely:
So when the storm the forest rends,
The robin in the hedge descends,
And sober chirps securely.

Additional verse in Closeburn MS.—

Now for my friends' and brethren's sakes,
And for my dear-loved Land o' Cakes,
I pray with holy fire:
Lord, send a rough-shod troop o' hell,
O'er a' wad Scotland buy or sell,
To grind them in the mire!

THIRD EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY

Late crippled of an arm, and now a leg,*
About to beg a pass for leave to beg:
Dull, listless, teased, dejected, and deprest,
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest;)
Will generous Graham list to his poet's wail?
(It soothes poor Misery, heark'ning to her tale,)
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature! partial Nature! I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain.
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forests, and one spurns the ground:
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell;
Thy minions, kings, defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power;
Foxes and statesmen subtle wiles insure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedgehog in their robes are snug;
Even silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes—her dreaded spear and darts.
But, oh! thou bitter stepmother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the bard!

---

* Burns wrote to Mrs Dunlop, on the 7th of February 1791, "that, by a fall not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple for some time and this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing."

A thing unteachable in worldly skill,
And half an idiot, too, more helpless still;
No heels to bear him from the opening dun:
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfactory, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich Dulness' comfortable fur;—
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears the unbroken blast from every side:
Vampire booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics!—appall'd I venture on the name,
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame:
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes! *
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose.

His heart by causeless wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear:
Foil'd, bleeding, tortured, in the unequal strife,
The hapless poet flounders on through life;
Till, fled each hope that once his bosom fired,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspired,
Low sunk in squalid unprotected age,
Dead, even resentment, for his injured page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage.
So, by some hedge, the generous steed deceased,
For half-starved snarling curs a dainty feast,
By toil and famine worn to skin and bone,
Lies senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O Dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!
Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of Fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober selfish ease they sip it up:
Conscious the bounteous meed they well deserve,
They only wonder "some folks" do not starve.
The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
When Disappointment snaps the clue of Hope,
And through disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude that "fools are fortune's care."
So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

* The allusion here is to Alexander Munro, the distinguished Professor o Anatomy in the University of Edinburgh in Burns's day.

Not so the idle Muses' mad-cap train,
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain!
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring heaven or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear!
Already one stronghold of hope is lost—
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;
(Fled, like the sun eclipsed as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears:)
Oh! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish prayer!—
Fintry, my other stay, long bless and spare!
Through a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May bliss domestic smooth his private path,
Give energy to life, and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

FOURTH EPISTLE TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY.

The following verses were written in acknowledgment of the favour the previous epistle prayed for. Cunningham justly says, "Robert Graham of Fintry had the merit of doing all that was done for Burns in the way of raising him out of the toiling humility of his condition, and enabling him to serve the Muse without dread of want."

I CALL no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled Muse may suit a bard that feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me along your wandering spheres,
Only to number out a villain's years!

EPIGRAMS, EPITAPHS, &c.

THOUGH FICKLE FORTUNE HAS DECEIVED ME.

"The following," says Burns, "was written extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which, indeed, threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned already, (in Commonplace-book, March 1784;) and though the weather has brightened up a little with me since, yet there has always been a tempest brewing round me in the grim sky of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will, some time or other, perhaps ere long, overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell, to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness."

THOUGH fickle Fortune has deceived me,
She promised fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereaved me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'll act with prudence as far's I'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come, Misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

ON JOHN DOVE, INNKEEPER, MAUCHLINE.

The subject of the following lines was the landlord of the Whitefoord Arms in Mauchline.

HERE lies Johnny Pigeon;
What was his religion?
Whae'er desires to ken,[1]
To some other warl'
Maun follow the carl,[2]
For here Johnny Pigeon had nane!

[1] Know. [2] Old man.

Strong ale was ablution—
Small beer persecution,
A dram was *memento mori*;
But a full flowing bowl
Was the saving his soul,
And port was celestial glory.

TO A PAINTER.

While in Edinburgh, the poet paid a visit to the studio of a well-known painter, whom he found at work on a picture of Jacob's dream; and having looked at the sketch for a little, he wrote the following verses on the back of it:—

DEAR ——, I'll gie ye some advice,
You'll tak it no uncivil:
You shouldna paint at angels mair,
But try and paint the devil.

To paint an angel's kittle wark,
Wi' auld Nick there's less danger;
You'll easy draw a weel-kent face,
But no sae weel a stranger.

R. B.

EPITAPH ON THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

The following lines were inscribed on a small head-stone erected over the grave of the poet's father in Alloway Kirkyard:—

O YE whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious reverence, and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father, and the generous friend;

The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
"For even his failings lean'd to virtue's side." *

A FAREWELL.

These lines form the conclusion of a letter from Burns to Mr John Kennedy, dated Kilmarnock, August 1786.

FAREWELL, *dear friend!* may guid luck hit you,
And, 'mang her favourites admit you!
If e'er Detraction shone to smite you,
May nane believe him.
And ony deil that thinks to get you,
Good Lord deceive him.

---

* Goldsmith.

ON A WAG IN MAUCHLINE.

The wag here meant was James Smith, the James Smith of the epistle commencing, "Dear Smith, the sleest, pawkie thief."

LAMENT him, Mauchline husbands a',
He often did assist ye;
For had ye staid whole years awa',
Your wives they ne'er had miss'd ye.
Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye pass
To school in bands thegither,
Oh, tread ye lightly on his grass—
Perhaps he was your father.

POETICAL REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

MOSSGIEL, 1786.

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,
And faith, I am gay and hearty!
To tell the truth and shame the deil,
I am as fou as Bartie: *

But foorsday, sir, my promise leal,
Expect me o' your party,
If on a beastie I can speel,
Or hurl in a cartie.—R. B.

TO A YOUNG LADY IN A CHURCH.

During the poet's Border tour, he went to church one Sunday, accompanied by Miss Ainslie, the sister of his travelling companion. The text for the day happened to contain a severe denunciation of obstinate sinners. And Burns, observing the young lady intently turning over the leaves of her Bible in search of the passage, took out a small piece of paper, and wrote the following lines upon it, which he immediately passed to her:—

FAIR maid, you need not take the hint,
Nor idle texts pursue;
'Twas *guilty sinners* that he meant,
Not *angels* such as you!

---

* A proverbial saying, which may be interpreted by a line of an old song—
"I'm no just fou, but I'm gayley yet."

VERSES

WRITTEN UNDER THE PORTRAIT OF FERGUSSON, THE POET, IN A COPY OF THAT AUTHOR'S WORKS PRESENTED TO A YOUNG LADY IN EDINBURGH, MARCH 17, 1787.

CURSE on ungrateful man, that can be pleased,
And yet can starve the author of the pleasure!
O thou, my elder brother in misfortune,
By far my elder brother in the Muses,
With tears I pity thy unhappy fate!
Why is the bard unpitied by the world,
Yet has so keen a relish of its pleasures?

ON THE ILLNESS OF A FAVOURITE CHILD.

Now health forsakes that angel face,
  Nae mair my dearie smiles;
Pale sickness withers ilka grace,
  And a' my hopes beguiles.

The cruel Powers reject the prayer
  I hourly mak for thee!
Ye heavens, how great is my despair,
  How can I see him die!

EXTEMPORE ON TWO LAWYERS.

During Burns's first sojourn in Edinburgh in 1787, he paid a visit to the Parliament House, and the result was two well-drawn sketches of the leading counsel of the day – the Lord Advocate, Mr Hay Campbell, (afterwards Lord President,) and the Dean of Faculty, Harry Erskine.

LORD ADVOCATE.

HE clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
  He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation mist
  His argument he tint[1] it;
He gapèd for 't, he grapèd[2] for 't,
  He found it was awa', man;
But what his common sense cam short,
  He ekèd out wi' law, man.

---

[1] Lost. [2] Groped.

DEAN OF FACULTY.

Collected Harry stood a wee,
Then open'd out his arm, man;
His lordship sat, wi' ruefu' ee,
And eyed the gathering storm, man:
Like wind-driven hail, it did assail,
Or torrents owre a linn, man;
The Bench sae wise, lift up their eyes,
Half-waken'd wi' the din, man.

THE HIGHLAND WELCOME.

Cunningham says:—"Burns, on repassing the Highland border, in 1787, turned round and bade farewell to the hospitalities of the north in these happy lines. Another account states that he was called on for a toast at table, and gave 'The Highland Welcome,' much to the pleasure of all who heard him."

When Death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come;
In heaven itself I'll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.

EXTEMPORE ON WILLIAM SMELLIE,

AUTHOR OF THE "PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL HISTORY," AND MEMBER OF THE ANTIQUARIAN AND ROYAL SOCIETIES OF EDINBURGH.

Smellie belonged to a club called the Crochallan Fencibles, of which Burns was a member.

Shrewd Willie Smellie to Crochallan came,
The old cock'd hat, the gray surtout, the same;
His bristling beard just rising in its might,
'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night;
His uncomb'd grizzly locks wild staring, thatch'd
A head for thought profound and clear unmatch'd:
Yet though his caustic wit was biting, rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

VERSES WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE INN AT CARRON

The following lines were written on being refused admittance to the Carron iron-works:—

We cam na here to view your warks
In hopes to be mair wise,
But only lest we gang to hell,
It may be nae surprise:

But when we tirled at your door,
Your porter dought na hear us;
Sae may, should we to hell's yetts come,
Your billy Satan sair us!

LINES ON VIEWING STIRLING PALACE.

The following lines were scratched with a diamond on a pane of glass in a window of the inn at which Burns put up, on the occasion of his first visit to Stirling. They were quoted to his prejudice at the time, and no doubt did him no good with those who could best serve his interests. On his next visit to Stirling, he smashed the pane with the butt-end of his riding whip:—

HERE Stuarts once in glory reign'd,
And laws for Scotland's weal ordain'd;
But now unroof'd their palace stands,
Their sceptre's sway'd by other hands;
The injured Stuart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills their throne—
An idiot race, to honour lost:
Who know them best despise them most.

THE REPROOF.

RASH mortal, and slanderous poet, thy name
Shall no longer appear in the records of fame;
Dost not know, that old Mansfield, who writes like the Bible,
Says, The more 'tis a truth, sir, the more 'tis a libel?

LINES

WRITTEN UNDER THE PICTURE OF THE CELEBRATED MISS BURNS.

Miss Burns was a "gay" lady, well known to the "fast" young fellows of the Scottish metropolis in the poet's day.

CEASE, ye prudes, your envious railing,
Lovely Burns has charms—confess.
True it is, she had one failing—
Had a woman ever less?

ON INCIVILITY SHOWN TO HIM AT INVERARY.

The poet having halted at Inverary during his first Highland tour, put up at the inn; but on finding himself neglected by the landlord, whose house was filled with visitors to the Duke of Argyle, he resented the incivility in the following lines:—

WHOE'ER he be that sojourns here,
I pity much his case,
Unless he come to wait upon
The lord their god, his Grace.

There 's naething here but Highland pride,
And Highland cauld and hunger;
If Providence has sent me here,
'Twas surely in His anger.

ON A SCHOOLMASTER.

William Michie was schoolmaster of the parish of Cleish, in Fifeshire, and became acquainted with Burns during his first visit to Edinburgh, in 1787.

HERE lie Willie Michie's banes;
O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schoolin' o your weans,
For clever deils he 'll mak 'em!

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO THE LANDLADY OF THE INN AT ROSSLYN.

MY blessings on you, sonsie wife;
I ne'er was here before;
You 've gien us walth for horn and knife,
Nae heart could wish for more.

Heaven keep you free frae care and strife,
Till far ayont fourscore;
And, while I toddle on through life,
I 'll ne'er gang by your door.

ON ELPHINSTONE'S TRANSLATION OF MARTIAL'S "EPIGRAMS."

Stopping at a merchant's shop in Edinburgh," says Burns, "a friend of mine one day put Elphinstone's translation of Martial into my hand, and desired my opinion of it. I asked permission to write my opinion on a blank leaf o' the book; which being granted, I wrote this epigram."

O THOU, whom Poesy abhors!
Whom Prose has turnèd out of doors!
Heard'st thou that groan?—proceed no further—
'Twas laurell'd Martial roaring, "Murther!"

INNOCENCE.

Innocence
Looks gaily-smiling on ; while rosy Pleasure
Hides young Desire amid her flowery wreath,
And pours her cup luxuriant : mantling high
The sparkling heavenly vintage—Love and Bliss!

LINES

WRITTEN ON A PANE OF GLASS IN THE INN AT MOFFAT.

While Burns was in the inn at Moffat one day, the "charming, lovely Davies" of one of his songs happened to pass, accompanied by a tall and portly lady, and on a friend asking him why God had made Miss Davies so small and the other lady so large, he replied—

Ask why God made the gem so small,
And why so huge the granite?
Because God meant mankind should set
The higher value on it.

LINES

SPOKEN EXTEMPORE ON BEING APPOINTED TO THE EXCISE.

Searching auld wives' barrels,
Och, hon! the day!
That clarty barm should stain my laurels;
But—what 'll ye say?
These movin' things ca'd wives and weans
Wad move the very hearts o' stanes!

EPITAPH ON W——.

Stop, thief! Dame Nature cried to Death,
As Willie drew his latest breath;
You have my choicest model ta'en,
How shall I make a fool again?

ON A PERSON NICKNAMED THE MARQUIS.

The person who bore this name was the landlord of a tavern in Dumfries frequented by Burns. In a moment of weakness he asked the poet to write his

epitaph, which he immediately did, in a style not at all to the taste of the Marquis.

HERE lies a mock Marquis, whose titles were shamm'd;
If ever he rise—it will be to be damn'd.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.

John M'Murdo was steward to the Duke of Queensberry, and the faithful friend of Burns during the whole period of his residence in Nithsdale.

OH could I give thee India's wealth
As I this trifle send!
Because thy joy in both would be
To share them with a friend.

But golden sands did never grace
The Heliconian stream;
Then take what gold could never buy—
An honest bard's esteem.

TO THE SAME.

BLEST be M'Murdo to his latest day!
No envious cloud o'ercast his evening ray;
No wrinkle furrow'd by the hand of Care,
Nor ever sorrow add one silver hair!
Oh, may no son the father's honour stain,
Nor ever daughter give the mother pain!

ON CAPTAIN FRANCIS GROSE.

One night at table, when the wine had circulated pretty freely, and

"The mirth and fun grew fast and furious,"

Captain Grose, it is said, amused with the sallies of the poet, requested a couplet on himself. Having eyed the corpulent antiquary for a little, Burns repeated the following:—

THE devil got notice that Grose was a-dying,
So whip at the summons old Satan came flying;
But when he approach'd where poor Francis lay moaning,
And saw each bedpost with its burden a-groaning,
Astonish'd, confounded, cried Satan, "By God!
I'll want 'im, ere I take such a damnable load!"

ON GRIZZEL GRIM.

HERE lies with Death auld Grizzel Grim,
Lincluden's ugly witch;
O Death, how horrid is thy taste
To lie with such a bitch!

ON MR BURTON.

Burns having on one occasion met a young Englishman of the name of Burton, he became very importunate that the poet should compose an epitaph for him. "In vain," says Cunningham, "the bard objected that he was not sufficiently acquainted with his character and habits to qualify him for the task; the request was constantly repeated with a "Dem my eyes, Burns, do write an epitaph for me: oh, dem my blood, do, Burns, write an epitaph for me." Overcome by his importunity, Burns at last took out his pencil and produced the following:—

HERE cursing, swearing Burton lies,
A buck, a beau, or Dem my eyes!
Who in his life did little good;
And his last words were—Dem my blood!

POETICAL REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

THE king's most humble servant, I
Can scarcely spare a minute;
But I'll be wi' you by and by,
Or else the devil 's in it.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE *STAR*.

"Burns at one period," says Cunningham, "was in the habit of receiving the *Star* newspaper gratuitously; but as it came somewhat irregularly to hand, he sent the following lines to head-quarters, to insure more punctuality:"—

DEAR Peter, dear Peter,
We poor sons of metre,
Are often negleckit, ye ken;
For instance, your sheet, man,
(Though glad I 'm to see 't, man,)
I get it no ae day in ten.

ON BURNS'S HORSE BEING IMPOUNDED.

Being in Carlisle, the poet's nag was turned out to grass, and had trespassed on some grounds belonging to the corporation. The horse was impounded, but

the mayor, hearing to whom it belonged, gave orders for its liberation—"Let him have it, by all means, or the circumstance will be heard of for ages to come." As Burns had written the following lines previously, the worthy mayor's prophecy has come true:—

WAS e'er puir poet sae befitted,
The maister drunk—the horse committed?
Puir harmless beast! tak thee nae care,
Thou'lt be a horse when he's nae mair (*mayor.*)

LINES

SENT TO A GENTLEMAN WHOM HE HAD OFFENDED.

The friend was Mr Riddel of Woodley Park, at whose table, while under the influence of wine, he had indulged in a freedom of speech which gave offence to the company. The reparation made in the following lines was warmly accepted:—

THE friend whom wild from wisdom's way
The fumes of wine infuriate send;
(Not moony madness more astray;)
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine was the insensate frenzied part!
Ah! why should I such scenes outlive!
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

VERSES TO JOHN RANKINE,

ON HIS WRITING TO THE POET THAT A GIRL IN THAT PART OF THE COUNTRY WAS WITH CHILD BY HIM.

I AM a keeper of the law
In some sma' points, although not a';
Some people tell me gin I fa',
Ae way or ither,
The breaking of ae point, though sma',
Breaks a' thegither.

I hae been in for't ance or twice,
And winna say o'er far for thrice,
Yet never met with that surprise
That broke my rest,
But now a rumour's like to rise,
A whaup's i' the nest.

ON SEEING MISS FONTENELLE IN A FAVOURITE CHARACTER.

SWEET *naïveté* of feature,
Simple, wild, enchanting elf,
Not to thee, but thanks to Nature,
Thou art acting but thyself.

Wert thou awkward, stiff, affected,
Spurning nature, torturing art;
Loves and graces all rejected,
Then indeed thou 'dst act a part.

ON GABRIEL RICHARDSON, BREWER, DUMFRIES.

HERE brewer Gabriel's fire 's extinct,
And empty all his barrels:
He 's blest—if, as he brew'd, he drink—
In upright honest morals.

THE BLACK-HEADED EAGLE:

A FRAGMENT ON THE DEFEAT OF THE AUSTRIANS BY DUMOURIER, AT GEMAPPE, NOVEMBER 1792.

THE black-headed eagle,
As keen as a beagle,
He hunted owre height and owre howe;
But fell in a trap
On the braes o' Gemappe,
E'en let him come out as he dowe.

ON A SHEEP'S-HEAD.

Having been dining at the Globe Tavern, Dumfries, on one occasion when a sheep's-head happened to be the fare provided, he was asked to give something new as a grace, and instantly replied:—

O LORD, when hunger pinches sore,
Do Thou stand us in stead,
And send us from Thy bounteous store
A tup or wether head!—Amen.

After having dined, and greatly enjoyed this dainty, he was again asked to return thanks, when, without a moment's premeditation, he at once said:—

O Lord, since we have feasted thus,
Which we so little merit,
Let Meg now take away the flesh,
And Jock bring in the spirit!—Amen.

ON THE DEATH OF A LAP-DOG NAMED ECHO.

While Burns was on a visit to Kenmore Castle, the ancient seat of the Gordons, it happened that the lady's lap-dog died, and she requested him to write an epitaph for it, which he did as follows:—

In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore;
Now half-extinct your powers of song,
Sweet Echo is no more.

Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys;
Now half your din of tuneless sound
With Echo silent lies.

ON SEEING THE BEAUTIFUL SEAT OF LORD GALLOWAY.

This and the three following verses were written as political squibs during the heat of a contested election:—

What dost thou in that mansion fair?—
Flit, Galloway, and find
Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
The picture of thy mind!

ON THE SAME.

No Stewart art thou, Galloway,
The Stewarts all were brave;
Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
Not one of them a knave.

ON THE SAME.

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway,
Through many a far-famed sire!
So ran the far-famed Roman way,
So ended—in a mire!

TO THE SAME.

ON THE AUTHOR'S BEING THREATENED WITH HIS RESENTMENT.

SPARE me thy vengeance, Galloway,
In quiet let me live:
I ask no kindness at thy hand,
For thou hast none to give.

HOWLET FACE.

One of the Lords of Justiciary, says a correspondent of Mr Chambers's, while on circuit at Dumfries, had dined one day at Mr Miller of Dalswinton's; and having, according to the custom of the time, taken wine to such an extent as to affect his sight, said to his host, on entering the drawing-room, and at the same time pointing to one of his daughters, who was thought an uncommonly handsome woman, "Wha's yon howlet-faced thing in the corner?" The circumstance having been related to Burns, who happened to dine there next day, he took out his pencil, and wrote the following lines, which he handed to Miss Miller:—

How daur ye ca' me howlet-faced,
Ye ugly glowering spectre?
My face was but the keekin'-glass,
And there ye saw your picture!

THE BOOK-WORMS.

Having been shown into a magnificent library, while on a visit to a nobleman, and observing a splendidly-bound, but uncut and worm-eaten, copy of Shakespeare on the table, the poet left the following lines in the volume:—

THROUGH and through the inspirèd leaves,
Ye maggots, make your windings;
But, oh, respect his lordship's taste,
And spare the golden bindings!

EPIGRAM ON BACON.

Brownhill was a posting station some fifteen miles from Dumfries. Dining there on one occasion, the poet met a Mr Ladyman, a commercial traveller, who solicited a sample of his "rhyming ware." At dinner, beans and bacon were served, and the landlord, whose name was Bacon, had, as was his wont, thrust himself somewhat offensively into the company of his guests:—

AT Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer,
And plenty of bacon each day in the year;
We 've all things that 's neat, and mostly in season
But why always BACON?—come, give me a reason.

THE EPITAPH.

In this stinging epitaph Burns satirises Mrs Riddel of Woodley Park. He had taken offence because she seemed to pay more attention to some officers in the company than to the poet, who had a supreme contempt for "epauletted puppies," as he delighted to call them. This quarrel and the means he took of showing his anger, were not creditable to the poet, for he had no warmer friend and admirer than Mrs Riddel.

HERE lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly, gay in life's beam:
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her esteem.

ON MRS KEMBLE.

The poet having witnessed the performance of Mrs Kemble in the part of Yarico, one night at the Dumfries theatre, seized a piece of paper, wrote these lines with a pencil, and handed them to the lady at the conclusion of the performance.

KEMBLE, thou cur'st my unbelief
Of Moses and his rod;
At Yarico's sweet notes of grief
The rock with tears had flow'd.

THE CREED OF POVERTY.

"When the Board of Excise," says Cunningham, "informed Burns that his business was to act, and not think, he read the order to a friend, turned the paper, and wrote as follows:"—

IN politics if thou wouldst mix,
And mean thy fortunes be;
Bear this in mind—"Be deaf and blind;
Let great folks hear and see."

WRITTEN IN A LADY'S POCKET-BOOK.

The following lines indicate how strongly Burns sympathised with the lovers of liberty during the first outbreak of the French Revolution:—

GRANT me, indulgent Heaven, that I may live
To see the miscreants feel the pain they give:
Deal Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till slave and despot be but things which were,

THE PARSON'S LOOKS.

Some one having remarked that he saw falsehood in the very look of a certain reverend gentleman, the poet replied—

THAT there is falsehood in his looks
I must and will deny;
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.

EXTEMPORE,

PINNED TO A LADY'S COACH.

IF you rattle along like your mistress's tongue,
Your speed will outrival the dart;
But a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road,
If your stuff be as rotten's her heart.

ON ROBERT RIDDEL.

The poet traced these lines with a diamond on the window of the hermitage of Friars' Carse, the first time he visited it after the death of his friend the Laird of Carse

To Riddel, much-lamented man.
This ivied cot was dear;
Reader, dost value matchless worth?
This ivied cot revere.

ON EXCISEMEN.

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW IN DUMFRIES.

"One day," says Cunningham, "while in the King's Arms Tavern, Dumfries, Burns overheard a country gentleman talking disparagingly concerning excisemen. The poet went to a window, and on one of the panes wrote this rebuke with his diamond:"—

YE men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
'Gainst poor excisemen? give the cause a hearing;
What are your landlords' rent-rolls? taxing ledgers;
What premiers—what? even monarchs' mighty gaugers:
Nay, what are priests, those seeming godly wise men?
What are they, pray, but spiritual excisemen?

VERSES

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE GLOBE TAVERN, DUMFRIES.

THE graybeard, old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures,
Give me with gay Folly to live;
I grant him calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,
But Folly has raptures to give.

THE SELKIRK GRACE.

The poet having been on a visit to the Earl of Selkirk at St Mary's Isle, was asked to say grace at dinner. He repeated the following words, which have since been known in the district as "The Selkirk Grace:"—

SOME hae meat, and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
And sae the Lord be thankit.

EPITAPH ON A SUICIDE.

EARTH'D up here lies an imp o' hell,
Planted by Satan's dibble—
Poor silly wretch he 's damn'd himsel
To save the Lord the trouble.

TO DR MAXWELL,

ON MISS JESSIE STAIG'S RECOVERY.

"How do you like the following epigram," says the poet, in a letter to Thomson, "which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Doctor Maxwell was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave, and to him I address the following:"—

MAXWELL, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny;
You save fair Jessie from the grave?—
An angel could not die.

THE PARVENU.

Burns being present in a company where an ill-educated *parvenu* was boring every one by boasting of the many great people he had lately been visiting, gave vent to his feelings in the following lines:—

No more of your titled acquaintances boast,
And in what lordly circles you 've been;
An insect is still but an insect at most,
Though it crawl on the head of a queen!

POETICAL INSCRIPTION

FOR AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE.

The following lines were inscribed on an altar erected at the seat of Heron of Kerroughtree. They were written in 1795, when the hopes and triumphs of the French Revolution had made it a fashion to raise altars to Freedom, and plant trees to Liberty.

THOU of an independent mind,
With soul resolved, with soul resign'd;
Prepared power's proudest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be, nor have, a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
Approach this shrine, and worship here.

EXTEMPORE TO MR SYME,

ON REFUSING TO DINE WITH HIM.

John Syme of Ryedale was a gentleman of education and talent, and a constant companion of the poet's. These lines were written in reply to an invitation to dine, in which he promised the "first of company and the first of cookery."

Dec. 17. 1795.

No more of your guests, be they titled or not,
And cookery the first in the nation;
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit
Is proof to all other temptation.

TO MR SYME,

WITH A PRESENT OF A DOZEN OF PORTER.

JERUSALEM TAVERN, DUMFRIES.

OH, had the malt thy strength of mind,
Or hops the flavour of thy wit,
'Twere drink for first of humankind,
A gift that e'en for Syme were fit.

INSCRIPTION ON A GOBLET.

THERE 's death in the cup– sae beware!
Nay, more—there is danger in touching;
But wha can avoid the fell snare?
The man and his wine 's sae bewitching!

THE TOAST.

Burns having been called on for a song at a dinner given by the Dumfries Volunteers in honour of the anniversary of Rodney's great victory of the 12th of April 1782, gave the following lines in reply to the call :—

INSTEAD of a song, boys, I 'll give you a toast—
Here 's the memory of those on the twelfth that we lost!–
That we lost, did I say? nay, by Heaven, that we found:
For their fame it shall last while the world goes round.

The next in succession, I 'll give you—The King!
Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing!
And here 's the grand fabric, Our free Constitution,
As built on the base of the great Revolution;
And longer with politics not to be cramm'd,
Be Anarchy cursed, and be Tyranny damn'd;
And who would to Liberty e'er prove disloyal
May his son be a hangman, and he his first trial!

ON THE POET'S DAUGHTER.

The following lines were written on the loss of an "only daughter and darling child" of the poet's, who died in the autumn of 1795 :—

HERE lies a rose, a budding rose,
Blasted before its bloom:
Whose innocence did sweets disclose
Beyond that flower's perfume.

To those who for her loss are grieved,
This consolation 's given—
She 's from a world of woe relieved.
And blooms a rose in heaven.

ON A COUNTRY LAIRD.

The subject of these verses is said to have been Sir David Maxwell of Cardoness, who had given some offence to the poet during the heat of a contested election.

BLESS the Redeemer, Cardoness,
With grateful lifted eyes,
Who said that not the soul alone,
But body, too, must rise;

For had He said, "The soul alone
From death I will deliver;"
Alas! alas! O Cardoness,
Then thou hadst slept for ever!

THE TRUE LOYAL NATIVES.

The origin of these lines is thus related by Cromek.—"When politics ran high the poet happened to be in a tavern, and the following lines—the production of one of 'The True Loyal Natives,'—were handed over the table to Burns:—

'Ye sons of sedition, give ear to my song,
Let Syme, Burns, and Maxwell, pervade every throng;
With Craken the attorney, and Mundell the quack,
Send Willie the monger to hell with a smack.'

The poet took out a pencil and instantly wrote this reply:"—

YE true "Loyal Natives" attend to my song,
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;
From envy and hatred your corps is exempt,
But where is your shield from the darts of contempt?

EPITAPH ON ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Robert Aiken, writer, Ayr, was one of the poet's most intimate friends

KNOW thou, O stranger to the fame
Of this much-loved, much-honour'd name,
(For none that knew him need be told)
A warmer heart Death ne'er made cold!

ON A FRIEND.

The name of the friend is unknown.

AN honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with His image blest!
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth;
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss,
If there is none, he made the best of this.

EPITAPH ON TAM THE CHAPMAN.

Tam the chapman was a Mr Kennedy, a travelling agent for a commercial house The following lines were composed on his recovery from a severe illness:—

As Tam the Chapman on a day
Wi' Death forgather'd by the way,
Weel pleased, he greets a wight[1] sae famous,
And Death was nae less pleased wi' Thomas,
Wha cheerfully lays down the pack,
And there blaws up a hearty crack;[2]
His social, friendly, honest heart
Sae tickled Death, they couldna part:
Sae, after viewing knives and garters,
Death takes him hame to gie him quarters.

ON GAVIN HAMILTON.

THE poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blamed:
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be saved or damn'd!

ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.

HERE souter Hood in death does sleep;—
To hell, if he 's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear[3] to keep,
He 'll haud[4] it weel thegither.

ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

James Humphrey, a working mason, was the "noisy polemic" of this epitaph. Burns and he frequently disputed on Auld-Light and New-Light topics, and Humphrey, although an illiterate man, not unfrequently had the best of it. He died in great poverty, having solicited charity for some time before his death. We have heard it said that in soliciting charity from the strangers who arrived and departed by the Mauchline coach, he grounded his claims to their kindness on the epitaph—"Please, sirs, I'm Burns's bletherin' bitch!"

BELOW thir stanes lie Jamie's banes:
O Death, it 's my opinion,
Thou ne'er took such a bleth'rin' bitch
Into thy dark dominion!

---

[1] Fellow. [2] Gossip. [3] Wealth. [4] Hold

ON WEE JOHNNY.

HIC JACET WEE JOHNNY.

John Wilson, the printer of the Kilmarnock edition of the poet's works.

WHOE'ER thou art, O reader, know
That Death has murder'd Johnny!
And here his body lies fu' low—
For saul he ne'er had ony.

ON A NOTED COXCOMB.

LIGHT lay the earth on Billy's breast,
His chicken heart so tender;
But build a castle on his head,
His skull will prop it under.

ON MISS JEAN SCOTT OF ECCLEFECHAN.

The young lady, the subject of these lines, dwelt in Ayr, and cheered the poet, not only by her sweet looks, but also with her sweet voice.

OH! had each Scot of ancient times
Been, Jeannie Scott, as thou art,
The bravest heart on English ground,
Had yielded like a coward!

ON A HENPECKED COUNTRY SQUIRE.

As Father Adam first was fool'd,
A case that's still too common,
Here lies a man a woman ruled—
The devil ruled the woman.

ON THE SAME.

O DEATH, hadst thou but spared his life
Whom we this day lament!
We freely wad exchanged the wife,
And a' been weel content!

E'en as he is, cauld in his graff,
The swap[1] we yet will do't;
Tak thou the carlin's* carcase aff,
Thou'se get the saul to boot.

ON THE SAME.

One Queen Artemisia, as old stories tell,
When deprived of her husband she lovèd so well,
In respect for the love and affection he'd show'd her,
She reduced him to dust and she drank up the powder.

But Queen Netherplace, of a different complexion,
When call'd on to order the funeral direction,
Would have eat her dead lord, on a slender pretence,
Not to show her respect, but—to save the expense!

JOHNNY PEEP.

Burns having been on a visit to a town in Cumberland one day, entered a tavern and opened the door of a room, but on seeing three men sitting, he was about to withdraw, when one of them shouted, "Come in, Johnny Peep." The poet accordingly entered, and soon became the ruling spirit of the party. In the midst of their mirth, it was proposed that each should write a verse of poetry, and place it, along with a half-crown on the table—the best poet to have his half-crown returned, and the other three to be spent in treating the party. It is almost needless to say that the palm of victory was awarded to the following lines by Burns:—

Here am I, Johnny Peep;
I saw three sheep,
And these three sheep saw me;
Half-a-crown apiece
Will pay for their fleece,
And so Johnny Peep gets free.

THE HENPECKED HUSBAND.

It is said that the wife of a gentleman, at whose table the poet was one day dining, expressed herself with more freedom than propriety regarding her husband's extravagant convivial habits, a rudeness which Burns rebuked in these sharp lines:—

Cursed be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife!
Who has no will but by her high permission;
Who has not sixpence but in her possession;

---

[1] Exchange.

* Carlin—a woman with an evil tongue. In olden times used with reference to a woman suspected of having dealings with the devil.

Who must to her his dear friend's secret tell;
Who dreads a curtain-lecture worse than hell!
Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart;
I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
I'd kiss her maids, and kick the perverse bitch.

ON ANDREW TURNER.

In se'enteen hunder and forty-nine,
Satan took stuff to mak a swine,
And cuist it in a corner;
But wilily he changed his plan,
And shaped it something like a man,
And ca'd it Andrew Turner.

A GRACE BEFORE DINNER.

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want!
We bless thee, God of nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent:
And, if it please thee, heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But, whether granted or denied,
Lord, bless us with content!—Amen.

ON MR W. CRUIKSHANK.

One of the masters of the High School, Edinburgh, and a well-known friend of the poet's.

Honest Will's to heaven gane,
And mony shall lament him;
His faults they a' in Latin lay,
In English nane e'er kent them.

ON WAT.

The name of the hero of these terrible lines has not been recorded.

Sic a reptile was Wat,
Sic a miscreant slave,
That the very worms damn'd him
When laid in his grave.

"In his flesh there's a famine,"
A starved reptile cries;
"And his heart is rank poison,"
Another replies.

ON THE KIRK OF LAMINGTON, IN CLYDESDALE.

Having been stayed by a storm one Sunday at Lamington in Clydesdale, the poet went to church; but the day was so cold, the place so uncomfortable, and the sermon so poor, that he left the following poetic protest in the pew:—

As cauld a wind as ever blaw,
A caulder kirk, and in't but few;
As cauld a minister's e'er spak,
Ye'se a' be het ere I come back.

A MOTHER'S ADDRESS TO HER INFANT.

My blessin's upon thy sweet wee lippie:
My blessin's upon thy bonny ee-brie!
Thy smiles are sae like my blithe sodger laddie,
Thou's aye the dearer and dearer to me!

VERSES

WRITTEN ON A PANE OF GLASS, ON THE OCCASION OF A NATIONAL THANKSGIVING FOR A NAVAL VICTORY.

Ye hypocrites! are these your pranks?
To murder men, and gie God thanks!
For shame! gie o'er—proceed no further—
God won't accept your thanks for murther!

I MURDER hate by field or flood,
Though glory's name may screen us;
In wars at hame I'll spend my blood,
Life-giving wars of Venus.

The deities that I adore,
Are social peace and plenty;
I'm better pleased to make one more,
Than be the death of twenty.

My bottle is my holy pool,
That heals the wounds o' care and dool;
And pleasure is a wanton trout,
An' ye drink it dry, ye'll find him out.

ON JOHN BUSHBY.

Bushby, it seems, was a sharp-witted clever lawyer, who happened to cross the poet's path in politics, and was therefore considered a fair subject for a lampoon.

Here lies John Bushby, honest man!—
Cheat him, devil, gin you can.

LINES TO JOHN RANKINE.

These lines were written by Burns while on his deathbed, and forwarded to Rankine immediately after the poet's death.

He who of Rankine sang lies stiff and dead,
And a green grassy hillock haps his head;
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed!

TO MISS JESSY LEWARS.

'During the last illness of the poet," says Cunningham, "Mr Brown, the surgeon who attended him, came in, and stated that he had been looking at a collection of wild beasts just arrived, and pulling out the list of the animals, held it out to Jessy Lewars. The poet snatched it from him, took up a pen, and with red ink wrote the following on the back of the paper, saying, 'Now it is fit to be presented to a lady:'"—

Talk not to me of savages
From Afric's burning sun,
No savage e'er could rend my heart
As, Jessy, thou hast done.

But Jessy's lovely hand in mine,
A mutual faith to plight,
Not even to view the heavenly choir
Would be so blest a sight.

THE TOAST.

On another occasion, while Miss Lewars was waiting upon him during his illness, he took up a crystal goblet, and writing the following lines on it, presented it to her :—

FILL me with the rosy wine,
Call a toast—a toast divine ;
Give the poet's darling flame,
Lovely Jessy be the name ;
Then thou mayest freely boast
Thou hast given a peerless toast.

ON THE SICKNESS OF MISS JESSY LEWARS.

On Miss Lewars complaining of illness in the hearing of the poet, he said he would provide for the worst, and seizing another crystal goblet, he wrote as follows :—

SAY, sages, what 's the charm on earth
Can turn Death's dart aside?
It is not purity and worth,
Else Jessy had not died.

ON THE RECOVERY OF JESSY LEWARS.

On her recovering health, the poet said, "There is a poetic reason for it," and composed the following :—

BUT rarely seen since nature's birth,
The natives of the sky ;
Yet still one seraph 's left on earth,
For Jessy did not die.

A BOTTLE AND AN HONEST FRIEND.

Some doubt has been expressed by the brother of the poet as to the authenticity of this small piece.

"There 's nane that 's blest of humankind
But the cheerful and the gay, man.
Fal, lal," &c.

HERE'S a bottle and an honest friend!
What wad you wish for mair, man?
Wha kens, before his life may end,
What his share may be of care, man?

Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man;
Believe me, Happiness is shy,
And comes not aye when sought, man.

GRACE AFTER DINNER.

O THOU, in whom we live and move,
Who madest the sea and shore;
Thy goodness constantly we prove,
And, grateful, would adore.

And if it please Thee, Power above,
Still grant us, with such store,
The friend we trust, the fair we love,
And we desire no more.

ANOTHER.

LORD, we thank Thee and adore,
For temp'ral gifts we little merit;
At present we will ask no more—
Let William Hyslop give the spirit!

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

Mr Robert Carruthers, of Inverness, gives the following account of these lines:—"In 'The Statistical Account of Scotland,' the minister of Balmaghie, in Galloway, quoted the epitaph on a martyr's tombstone,—a stone 'with uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked;' and he added this depreciatory remark—'The author of which (the epitaph) no doubt supposed himself to have been writing poetry!'" Burns was nettled at this unfeeling comment, and wrote with his pencil on the page:—

The Solemn League and Covenant,
Now brings a smile, now brings a tear;
But sacred freedom too was theirs;
If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneer.

SONGS.

MY HANDSOME NELL.

TUNE—"I am a man unmarried."

Nelly Kilpatrick, the heroine of this song, was the daughter of the village blacksmith, and the poet's first partner in the labours of the harvest-field. She was the "sonsie quean" he sings of, whose "witching smile" first made his heart-strings tingle. "This song," he says, "was the first of my performances, and done at an early period of my life, when my heart glowed with honest, warm simplicity,—unacquainted and uncorrupted with the ways of a wicked world. It has many faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion; and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts – my blood sallies, at the remembrance."

OH, once I loved a bonny lass,
Ay, and I love her still;
And whilst that virtue warms my breast
I'll love my handsome Nell.
Fal, lal de ral, &c.

As bonny lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw;[1]
But for a modest, gracefu' mien,
The like I never saw.

A bonny lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the ee,
But without some better qualities
She 's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet;
And, what is best of a'—
Her reputation is complete,
And fair without a flaw.

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel;
And then there 's something in her gait
Gars[2] ony dress look weel.

[1] Well dressed. [2] Makes.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart;
But it 's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul!
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.

I DREAM'D I LAY WHERE FLOWERS WERE SPRINGING.

'These two stanzas," says the poet, "which are among the oldest of my printed pieces, I composed when I was seventeen."

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam,
Listening to the wild birds singing
By a falling crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Through the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling, drumlie wave.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd;
But lang or[1] noon, loud tempests storming,
A' my flowery bliss destroy'd.
Though fickle Fortune has deceived me,
(She promised fair, and perform'd but ill,)
Of mony a joy and hope bereaved me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

MY NANNIE, O.

TUNE—"My Nannie, O."

Agnes Fleming, the heroine of what has been termed the finest lovesong in any language, was at one time a servant in the house of Mr Gavin Hamilton, the poet's friend, and died unmarried well advanced in life. It may gratify some to know that the father of the poet lived to read this song, and that he expressed his hearty admiration of it.

BEHIND yon hills, where Lugar flows
'Mang moors and mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has closed,
And I 'll awa' to Nannie, O.

[1] Ere.

The westlin wind blaws loud and shrill;
The night 's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I 'll get my plaid, and out I 'll steal,
And owre the hills to Nannie, O.

My Nannie 's charming, sweet, and young,
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she 's bonny, O:
The opening gowan,[1] wat wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
And few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I 'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.

My riches a' 's my penny-fee,[2]
And I maun guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear[3] ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a' my Nannie, O.

Our auld guidman delights to view
His sheep and kye thrive bonny, O;
But I 'm as blithe that hauds his pleugh,
And has na care but Nannie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I 'll tak what Heaven will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life have I
But live and love my Nannie, O!

O TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

TUNE—"Invercauld's Reel."

Isabella Steven, the subject of these verses, was the daughter of a man in the neighbourhood of Lochlea, who possessed three acres of peat moss -an inheritance which she appears to have thought entitled her to treat the poet with disdain.

O TIBBIE, I hae seen the day
Ye wadna been sae shy;
For lack o' gear ye lightly[4] me,
But, trowth, I care na by.

Yestreen I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure:[5]

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[1] Daisy. [2] Wages. [3] World's wealth
[4] Slight. [5] Dust driven by the wind.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day
Ye wadna been sae shy;
For laik o' gear ye lightly me
But, trowth, I care nae by,
Yestreen I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But feint a hair care I.

—*Page* 302.

Ye geck[1] at me because I 'm poor,
But feint a hair care I.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,[2]
That ye can please me at a wink
Whene'er ye like to try.

But sorrow tak him that 's sae mean,
Although his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy quean,[3]
That looks sae proud and high.

Although a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt
Ye 'll cast yer head anither airt,[4]
And answer him fu' dry.

But if he hae the name o' gear,[5]
Ye 'll fasten to him like a brier,
Though hardly he, for sense or lear,[6]
Be better than the kye.[7]

But Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice;
The deil a ane wad spier your price
Were ye as poor as I.

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I wadna gie her in her sark[8]
For thee, wi' a' thy thousan' mark!
Ye need na look sae high.

ON CESSNOCK BANKS.

TUNE—"If he be a butcher neat and trim."

Ellison Begbie, the inspirer of this song of similes, was the daughter of a small farmer in the parish of Galston; and was, when the poet first knew and admired her, employed as a servant with a family on the banks of the Cessnock, about two miles from his home. The charms of this humble girl, which appear to have lain chiefly in the life and grace of her mind, were such, that the poet, after he had seen the finest Edinburgh ladies, acknowledged that she was, of all the women he had ever addressed, the only one who was likely to have made a pleasant companion for life. The song first appeared in Cromek's "Reliques," the editor having obtained it from "the oral communication of a lady residing at Glasgow, whom the bard in early life affectionately admired"—probably the heroine herself.

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1 Mock. 2 Money. 3 Wench. 4 Direction.
5 Wealth. 6 Learning. 7 Cows. 8 Shift

On Cessnock banks there lives a lass,
Could I describe her shape and mien,
The graces of her weelfaurd[1] face,
And the glancing of her sparkling een.

She 's fresher than the morning dawn,
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
When dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

She 's stately, like yon youthful ash
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And shoots it's head above each bush ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

She 's spotless as the flowering thorn,
With flowers so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her looks are like the sportive lamb,
When flowery May adorns the scene,
That wantons round its bleating dam ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That shades the mountain-side at e'en
When flower-reviving rains are past ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her forehead 's like the showery bow,
When shining sunbeams intervene,
And gild the distant mountain's brow ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her voice is like the evening thrush
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her lips are like the cherries ripe
That sunny walls from Boreas screen—
They tempt the taste and charm the sight ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising steep :
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas ;
And she 's twa glancing, sparkling een.

[1] Well-favoured.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Though matching beauty's fabled queen,
But the mind that shines in every grace.
And chiefly in her sparkling een.

IMPROVED VERSION.

On Cessnock banks *a lassie dwells,*
Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lassies a' she far excels;
And she's twa sparkling, roguish een.

She's *sweeter* than the morning dawn,
When rising Phœbus first is seen,
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
And she's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

She's stately, like yon youthful ash
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
And she's twa sparkling. *roguish* een.

She's spotless, *like* the flowering thorn,
With flowers so white, and leaves so green
When purest in the dewy morn;
And she's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

Her looks are like the *vernal May,*
When evening Phœbus shines serene,
While birds rejoice on every spray;
And she's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That climbs the mountain-sides at e'en
When flower-reviving rains are past;
And she's twa sparkling, *roguish* e'en.

Her forehead's like the showery bow,
When *gleaming* sunbeams intervene,
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
And she's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
The pride of all the flowery scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem;
And she's twa sparkling, roguish een.

Her teeth are like the nightly snow,
When pale the morning rises keen,
While hid the murm'ring streamlets flow;
And she's twa sparkling, roguish een.

Her lips are like *yon* cherries ripe
That sunny walls from Boreas screen—
They tempt the taste and charm the sight,
And she 's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas,
And she 's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

Her voice is like the evening thrush,
That sings on Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
And she 's twa sparkling, *roguish* een.

But it 's not her air, her form, her face,
Though matching beauty's fabled queen,
'Tis the mind that shines in every grace;
And chiefly in her *roguish* een.

MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

TUNE—"The Weaver and his Shuttle, O."

"The following song," says the poet, "is a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification; but the sentiments were the genuine feelings of my heart at the time it was written."

My father was a farmer
Upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me
In decency and order, O;
He bade me act a manly part,
Though I had ne'er a farthing, O,
For without an honest manly heart,
No man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world
My course I did determine, O;
Though to be rich was not my wish,
Yet to be great was charming, O:
My talents they were not the worst,
Nor yet my education, O;
Resolved was I, at least to try,
To mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay,
I courted Fortune's favour, O;
Some cause unseen still stept between,
To frustrate each endeavour, O:
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd:
Sometimes by friends forsaken, O,
And when my hope was at the top,
I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then sore harass'd, and tired at last,
With Fortune's vain delusion, O,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams,
And came to this conclusion, O:
The past was bad, and the future hid;
Its good or ill untried, O;
But the present hour was in my power,
And so I would enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I,
Nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil,
And labour to sustain me, O:
To plough and sow, to reap and mow,
My father bred me early, O;
For one, he said, to labour bred,
Was a match for Fortune fairly, O.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor,
Through life I'm doom'd to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay
In everlasting slumber, O.
No view nor care, but shun whate'er
Might breed me pain or sorrow, O,
I live to-day as well 's I may,
Regardless of to-morrow, O.

But cheerful still, I am as well
As a monarch in a palace, O,
Though Fortune's frown still hunts me down
With all her wonted malice, O:
I make indeed my daily bread,
But ne'er can make it farther, O;
But as daily bread is all I need,
I do not much regard her, O.

When sometimes by my labour
I earn a little money, O.
Some unforeseen misfortune
Comes generally upon me, O:
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect,
Or my good-natured folly, O;
But come what will, I've sworn it still,
I 'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power
With unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss,
You leave your view the farther, O.
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts,
Or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful, honest-hearted clown
I will prefer before you, O!

JOHN BARLEYCORN

A BALLAD.

The following is an improvement of an early song of English origin, a copy of which was obtained by Mr Robert Jameson from a black-letter sheet in the Pepys Library, Cambridge, and first published in his "Ballads :"—

THERE were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high ;
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head ;
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And showers began to fall :
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong ;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed speare,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale ;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age ;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They've ta'en a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee ;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore ;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turned him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim :
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him further woe:
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller used him worst of all—
He crush'd him 'tween two stones.

And they hae ta'en his very heart's blood
And drank it round and round,
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy:
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Though the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

MONTGOMERY'S PEGGY.

TUNE—"Gala Water."

"Montgomery's Peggy," says the poet, "who had been bred in a style of life rather elegant, was my deity for six or eight months." She was a superior servant in the house of Mr Montgomery of Coilsfield; and the poet's acquaintance with her arose from his sitting in the same seat with her at church. It cost him some heart-aches, he tells us, to get rid of this affair.

ALTHOUGH my bed were in yon muir,
Amang the heather, in my plaidie,
Yet happy, happy would I be,
Had I my dear Montgomery's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
I'd shelter dear Montgomery's Peggy.

Were I a baron proud and high,
And horse and servants waiting ready,
Then a' 'twad gie o' joy to me,
The sharin't wi' Montgomery's Peggy.

MARY MORISON.

TUNE—"Bide ye yet."

'Of all the productions of Burns," says Hazlitt, "his pathetic and serious love songs, in the manner of the old ballads are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to Mary Morison."

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing—
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Though this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said, amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

TUNE—"Corn Rigs are Bonny."

The heroine of this song is supposed to have been a young girl of the name of Annie Ronald, afterwards Mrs Paterson of Aikenbrae, and the daughter of a neighbour of the poet's, at whose house he was wont to be a frequent visitor.

IT was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonny,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa' to Annie:
The time flew by wi' tentless heed,
Till, 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me through the barley.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly,
I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley:
I kent her heart was a' my ain,
I loved her most sincerely:
I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace!
Her heart was beating rarely:
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She aye shall bless that happy night,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I hae been blithe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinkin'!
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin' gear;
I hae been happy thinkin':
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Though three times doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

Corn rigs, and barley rigs,
And corn rigs are bonny:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

PEGGY.

TUNE—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

The heroine of this song, about whom there appears to be some dubiety, is thought to have been the "Montgomery's Peggy" mentioned in page 309.

Now westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night,
To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains:

Through lofty groves the cushat[1] roves,
The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus every kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine;
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away! the cruel sway,
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murdering cry,
The fluttering, gory pinion!

But Peggy, dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading green and yellow:
Come, let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And every happy creature.

We 'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I 'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly prest,
Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal showers to budding flowers,
Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be, as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

GREEN GROW THE RASHES, O!

TUNE—"Green grow the rashes."

This song which the poet said was the genuine language of his heart, is an improvement upon an ancient homely ditty, of considerable spirit and freedom to the same air.

GREEN grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O!

There 's nought but care on every han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An 'twere na for the lasses, O?

---

[1] Wood-pigeon

The warl'ly [1] race may riches chase,
And riches still may fly them, O;
And though at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.

But gie me a canny [2] hour at een,
My arms about my dearie, O,
And warl'ly cares, and warl'ly men,
May a' gae tapsalteerie,[3] O.

For you sae douce,[4] ye sneer at this,
Ye 're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw
He dearly loved the lasses, O.

Auld Nature swears the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her 'prentice hand she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O.

THE CURE FOR ALL CARE.

TUNE—"Prepare, my dear brethren, to the tavern let's fly."

The poet composed this song shortly after joining the Torbolton Mason Lodge which was long noted in the west for its festivities.

No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving a snare—
For a big-bellied bottle 's the whole of my care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, though ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse;
There centum per centum, the cit with his purse;
But see you the crown, how it waves in the air!
There a big-bellied bottle still eases my care.

The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon provèd it fair,
That a big-bellied bottle 's a cure for all care.

I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;—
But the pursy old landlord just waddled up stairs
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

---

[1] Worldly. [2] Happy, lucky—quiet. [3] Topsy-turvy. [4] Grave

"Life's cares they are comforts."—a maxim laid down
By the bard, what d'ye call him, that wore the black gown
And faith, I agree with the old prig to a hair:
For a big-bellied bottle's a heaven of a care.

ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper, and make it o'erflow,
And honours masonic prepare for to throw;
May every true brother of the compass and square
Have a big-bellied bottle when harass'd with care!

MY JEAN!

TUNE—"The Northern Lass."

The heroine of this sweet snatch," says Cunningham, "was bonny Jean. It was composed when the poet contemplated the West India voyage, and an eternal separation from the land and all that was dear to him."

THOUGH cruel fate should bid us part,
Far as the pole and line,
Her dear idea round my heart
Should tenderly entwine.
Though mountains rise, and deserts howl,
And oceans roar between;
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean.

A FRAGMENT.

TUNE—"John Anderson my jo."

ONE night as I did wander,
When corn begins to shoot,
I sat me down to ponder
Upon an auld tree root:
Auld Ayr ran by before me,
And bicker'd[1] to the seas;
A cushat croodled[2] o'er me,
That echo'd through the braes.

WHEN CLOUDS IN SKIES DO COME TOGETHER.

"The following," says the poet in his first Commonplace Book, "was an extem pore effusion, composed under a train of misfortunes which threatened to undo me altogether"

---

[1] Raced leapingly. [2] Wood-pigeon cooed

When clouds in skies do come together
To hide the brightness of the weather,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' their storms are past and gone.

Though fickle Fortune has deceived me,
She promised fair, and perform'd but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereaved me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'll act with prudence, as far's I'm able;
But if success I must never find,
Then come, Misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

ROBIN.

Tune—"Dainty Davie."

It is related that when the poet's mother felt her time approach, his father took horse in the darkness of a stormy January night, and set out for Ayr to procure the necessary female attendant. On arriving at the ford of a rivulet which crossed the road, he found it so deep in flood, that a female wayfarer sat on the opposite side unable to cross, and, notwithstanding his own haste, he conveyed the woman through the stream on his horse. On returning from Ayr with the midwife, he found the gipsy, for such she proved to be, seated at his cottage fireside; and on the child's being placed in the lap of the woman shortly after his birth, she is said to have inspected his palm, after the manner of her tribe, and made the predictions which the poet has embodied in the song.

There was a lad was born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin', rantin' rovin';
Robin was a rovin' boy,
Rantin' rovin' Robin!

Our monarch's hindmost year but ane
Was five and twenty days begun,
'Twas then a blast o' Januar win'
Blew hansel in on Robin.

The gossip keekit[1] in his loof,[2]
Quo' she, wha lives will see the proof,
This waly[3] boy will be nae coof[4]—
I think we'll ca' him Robin.

He'll hae misfortunes great and sma',
But aye a heart aboon them a';
He'll be a credit till us a',
We'll a' be proud o' Robin.

[1] Peeped. [2] Palm. [3] Goodly. [4] Fool.

But, sure as three times three mak nine,
I see, by ilka score and line,
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze[1] me on thee, Robin.

Guid faith, quo' she, I doubt ye gar
The bonny lasses lie aspar,
But twenty fauts ye may hae waur,
So blessin's on thee, Robin!

LUCKLESS FORTUNE.

O RAGING Fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!
O raging Fortune's withering blast
Has laid my leaf full low, O!

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
My blossom sweet did blow, O;
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
And made my branches grow, O

But luckless Fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O;
But luckless Fortune's northern storms
Laid a' my blossoms low, O.

THE MAUCHLINE LADY.

TUNE—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

WHEN first I came to Stewart Kyle,
My mind it was na steady:
Where'er I gaed, where'er I rade,
A mistress still I had aye;

But when I came roun' by Mauchline town,
Not dreadin' ony body,
My heart was caught, before I thought,
And by a Mauchline lady.*

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

TUNE—"Braes o' Ballochmyle."

This song was composed on the amiable family of Whitefoord's being compelled to part with their hereditary estate, and leave "the braes of Ballochmyle."

[1] A term of endearment.

* Jean Armour.

"Maria" was the eldest daughter of Sir John Whitefoord, and afterwards became Mrs Cranston.

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lea,
Nae laverock[1] sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the ee.
Through faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the while,
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the Braes o' Ballochmyle!

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye 'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies dumb, in withering bowers,
Again ye 'll charm the vocal air.
But here, alas! for me nae mair
Shall birdie charm or floweret smile:
Fareweel the bonny banks of Ayr,
Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

YOUNG PEGGY.

TUNE—"The last time I cam o'er the muir."

The daughter of a landed proprietor in Carrick, whom Burns happened to meet at the house of a friend in Mauchline, was the heroine of these lines. The young lady's wit, youth, and beauty, so fascinated the poet, that he wrote the song, and sent it to her with a highly complimentary letter.

YOUNG Peggy blooms our bonniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn the springing grass
With pearly gems adorning:
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each freshening flower.

Her lips more than the cherries bright,
A richer dye has graced them;
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,
And sweetly tempt to taste them;
Her smile is, like the evening, mild,
When feather'd tribes are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
Such sweetness would relent her;
As blooming Spring unbends the brow
Of surly, savage Winter.

[1] Lark.

Detraction's eye no aim can gain,
Her winning powers to lessen;
And spiteful Envy grins in vain,
The poison'd tooth to fasten.

Ye Powers of Honour, Love, and Truth,
From every ill defend her;
Inspire the highly-favour'd youth
The destinies intend her;
Still fan the sweet connubial flame,
Responsive in each bosom;
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.

THE RANTIN' DOG THE DADDIE O'T.

TUNE—"East neuk o' Fife."

The subject of this lively ditty was a girl of the name of Elizabeth Paton, a domestic servant in the poet's house, and the mother of his illegitimate child —"sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess." "I composed it," says the poet, "pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular acquaintance of mine, who was at the time under a cloud."

Oh wha my babie-clouts[1] will buy?
Oh wha will tent[2] me when I cry?
Wha will kiss me where I lie?—
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

Oh wha will own he did the faut?
Oh wha will buy the groanin' maut?[3]
Oh wha will tell me how to ca't!—
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

When I mount the creepie-chair,*
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I'll seek nae mair,
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

Wha will crack to me my lane?
Wha will mak me fidgin-fain?[4]
Wha will kiss me o'er again? -
The rantin' dog the daddie o't.

---

[1] Baby-clothes.
[2] Heed.
[3] Malt to brew ale to welcome the birth of the child.
[4] Fidget with delight.

* The stool of repentance, on which culprits formerly sat when making public satisfaction in the church.

MENIE.*

TUNE—"Johnny's Gray Breeks."

The chorus of this beautiful lyric was borrowed by Burns from a song composed by an Edinburgh gentleman; but it has been generally objected to by critics as interfering with the sombre sentiments of the lines.

AGAIN rejoicing nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues,
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

CHORUS.

And maun I still on Menie dote,
And bear the scorn that 's in her ee?
For it's jet, jet black, and it's like a hawk,
And it winna let a body be!

In vain to me the cowslips blaw,
In vain to me the violets spring;
In vain to me, in glen or shaw,[1]
The mavis and the lintwhite[2] sing.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
Wi' joy the tentie[3] seedsman stalks;
But life to me 's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.[4]

The wanton coot the water skims,
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
And everything is blest but I.

The shepherd steeks[5] his faulding slap,[6]
And owre the moorlands whistles shrill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wandering step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blithe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist I hameward glide.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When nature all is sad like me!

---

1 Wood. 2 Linnet. 3 Heedful.
4 Wakes. 5 Shuts. 6 Gate.

* The common abbreviation of Mariamne.

THERE WAS A LASS.

TUNE—"Duncan Davison."

THERE was a lass, they ca'd her Meg,
And she held o'er the moor to spin;
There was a lad that follow'd her,
They ca'd him Duncan Davison.
The moor was driegh,[1] and Meg was skiegh,[2]
Her favour Duncan couldna win;
For wi' the rock she wad him knock,
And aye she shook the temper-pin.

As o'er the moor they lightly foor,[3]
A burn was clear, a glen was green,
Upon the banks they eased their shanks,
And aye she set the wheel between:
But Duncan swore a haly aith,
That Meg should be a bride the morn,
Then Meg took up her spinnin' graith,[4]
And flang them a' out o'er the burn.

LAMENT,

WRITTEN AT A TIME WHEN THE POET WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE SCOTLAND.

In the first edition the Editor inserted this piece without comment, although aware that there were doubts as to its authenticity. Through his friend Mr Gunnyon, of Kilmarnock, he is enabled to state that it was written by a Mr John Burt, a teacher in Kilmarnock, who sent it to the *Ayr Advertiser* of June 23, 1814, as an unpublished song of Burns's, with the view of securing its insertion. Burt having afterwards emigrated to America, where he attained to an honourable position in his profession, published at Bridgewater, U.S., a volume of poems in 1819, in which "The Lament" was included. The Editor thinks the verses and their history of sufficient interest to warrant their still being retained.

O'ER the mist-shrouded cliffs of the lone mountain straying,
Where the wild winds of winter incessantly rave,
What woes wring my heart while intently surveying
The storm's gloomy path on the breast of the wave!

Ye foam-crested billows, allow me to wail,
Ere ye toss me afar from my loved native shore;
Where the flower which bloom'd sweetest in Coila's green vale
The pride of my bosom, my Mary's no more!

No more by the banks of the streamlet we'll wander,
And smile at the moon's rimpled face in the wave;
No more shall my arms cling with fondness around her,
For the dewdrops of morning fall cold on her grave.

No more shall the soft thrill of love warm my breast,
I haste with the storm to a far-distant shore;
Where, unknown, unlamented, my ashes shall rest,
And joy shall revisit my bosom no more.

---

[1] Tedious. [2] High-minded. [3] Went. [4] Geer.

We'll big a house—a wee, wee house,
And we will live like king and queen,
Sae blithe and merry we will be
When ye set by the wheel at e'en.
A man may drink and no be drunk;
A man may fight and no be slain;
A man may kiss a bonny lass,
And aye be welcome back again.

AFTON WATER.

TUNE—"The Yellow-hair'd Laddie."

There appears to be some dubiety regarding the heroine of this fine song. Currie and Cunningham having asserted that it was written in honour of Mrs Stewart of Afton Lodge, an early patroness of the poet's. A daughter of Mrs Dunlop's, however, and the poet's eldest brother Gilbert, affirmed that they remembered hearing Burns say that it was written upon the Coilsfield dairy-maid, the dearly-loved and long-remembered Highland Mary.

FLOW gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove, whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear—
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There, oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flowerets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary 's asleep by thy murmuring stream—
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream!

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE.

TUNE—"The deuks dang o'er my daddy."

"This," says the poet, "was a composition of mine before I was at all known in the world. My Highland lassie [Mary] was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love." For an account of this simple, interesting girl, whom the poet's passion has placed in "Fame's proud temple," and clothed with immortality as with a garment, the reader is referred to the introduction to the verses entitled, "To Mary in Heaven," p. 361. Burns having sent this song to Mary when she was residing with her parents in the Highlands, her mother saw it, and greatly admired it; and years after the death of this gentle girl, whom every one seems to have loved, it is said the poor old woman was wont to soothe her sorrow by singing to her grandchildren the sweet strains in which the poet has celebrated the beauty and charms of her favourite daughter. Having outlived her husband and many of her children, she died in great poverty at Greenock in 1822.

NAE gentle* dames, though e'er sae fair,
Shall ever be my Muse's care:
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my Highland Lassie, O.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plains sae rushy, O,
I set me down wi' right good will,
To sing my Highland Lassie, O.

Oh, were yon hills and valleys mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland Lassie, O.

But fickle Fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea!
But while my crimson currents flow,
I'll love my Highland Lassie, O.

Although through foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland Lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billows' roar,
For her I'll trace the distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland Lassie, O.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
'Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland Lassie, O.

* Gentle is used here in opposition to simple, in the Scottish and old English sense of the word.—*Nae gentle dames*—no high-blooded names.—CURRIE.

Fareweel the glen sae bushy, O!
Fareweel the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland Lassie, O!

MARY!

TUNE.—"Blue Bonnets."

This beautiful song was found amongst the poet's manuscripts after his death inscribed, "A Prayer for Mary." Who Mary was the world knows.

POWERS celestial! whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care;
Let her form sae fair and faultless,
Fair and faultless as your own,
Let my Mary's kindred spirit
Draw your choicest influence down.

Make the gales you waft around her
Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
Soothe her bosom into rest.
Guardian angels! oh, protect her,
When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
Make her bosom still my home!

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

"In my very early years," says the poet, in a letter to Mr Thomson in 1792 "when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following fare well of a dear girl [Highland Mary]:"—

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar?

Oh, sweet grow the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me
When I forget my vow!

Oh, plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
Oh, plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time!

ELIZA.

TUNE—"Gilderoy."

The heroine of this song was the "Miss Betty is braw," one of the Mauchline belles whom the poet has celebrated in epigrammatic verse. She was born and brought up in Ayrshire, was of an amiable disposition, and appears to have sympathised with the poet in all his sufferings, and thus raised, says Chambers, a kind of love, chiefly composed of gratitude, in his bosom. She ultimately married a Mr James Stewart, and long survived the poet, having died at Alva in 1827, in the 74th year of her age.

FROM thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore;
The cruel fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar;
But boundless oceans roaring wide
Between my love and me,
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee!

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in mine ear,
We part to meet no more!
The latest throb that leaves my heart,
While death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh!

A FAREWELL TO THE BRETHREN OF ST JAMES'S LODGE TORBOLTON.

TUNE—"Good night, and joy be wi' you a'."

The poet is said to have chanted this "Farewell" at a meeting of St James's Mason Lodge at Torbolton, while his chest was on the way to Greenock, and he had just written the last song he thought he should ever compose in Scotland. The person alluded to in the last stanza was Major-General James Montgomery, who was Worshipful Master, while Burns was Depute-Master.

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the mystic tie!
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy!
Though I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's slidd'ry ba',[1]
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, though far awa'.

Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful, festive night;
Oft, honour'd with supreme command,
Presided o'er the sons of light:
And, by that hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but craftsmen ever saw!
Strong Memory on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa'!

May freedom, harmony, and love,
Unite you in the grand design,
Beneath the Omniscient eye above,
The glorious Architect Divine!
That you may keep the unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
Till order bright completely shine,
Shall be my prayer when far awa'.

And you, farewell! whose merits claim,
Justly, that highest badge to wear!
Heaven bless your honour'd, noble name,
To masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round—I ask it with a tear—
To him, the Bard that 's far awa'.

THE SONS OF OLD KILLIE.

TUNE—"Shawnboy."

Having visited the Kilmarnock Mason Lodge, presided over by his friend William Parker, Burns produced the following song. William Parker was a Kilmarnock banker, and had subscribed for thirty copies of the first edition of the poems.

YE sons of old Killie, assembled by Willie,
To follow the noble vocation;
Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
To sit in that honourèd station.

---

[1] Slippery ball.

I've little to say, but only to pray,
As praying 's the *ton* of your fashion;
A prayer from the Muse you well may excuse,
'Tis seldom her favourite passion.

Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide,
Who markèd each element's border;
Who formèd this frame with beneficent aim,
Whose sovereign statute is order;
Within this dear mansion may wayward Contention
Or witherèd Envy ne'er enter;
May Secrecy round be the mystical bound,
And Brotherly Love be the centre!

SONG,

IN THE CHARACTER OF A REINED FARMER.

TUNE—"Go from my window, love, do."

'By the liberality of Mr Dick, bookseller, Ayr," says Mr Robert Chambers, in his recent edition of the poet's works, "the present proprietor of a manuscript of ten leaves, in Burns's hand-writing, and which was formerly in the possession of Mrs General Stewart of Stair, we are enabled to give the following song, which has not hitherto seen the light:"—

THE sun he is sunk in the west,
All creatures retirèd to rest,
While here I sit all sore beset
With sorrow, grief, and wo;
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

The prosperous man is asleep,
Nor hears how the whirlwinds sweep;
But Misery and I must watch
The surly tempest blow.
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

There lies the dear partner of my breast,
Her cares for a moment at rest:
Must I see thee, my youthful pride,
Thus brought so very low!
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

There lie my sweet babies in her arms,
No anxious fear their little heart alarms
But for their sake my heart doth ache,
With many a bitter throe:
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O!

I once was by Fortune carest,
I once could relieve the distrest:

Now, life's poor support hardly earn'd,
My fate will scarce bestow :
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O !

No comfort, no comfort I have !
How welcome to me were the grave !
But then my wife and children dear,
O whither would they go ?
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O !

O whither, O whither shall I turn !
All friendless, forsaken, forlorn !
For in this world Rest or Peace
I never more shall know !
And it 's O, fickle Fortune, O !

THE LASS OF BALLOCHMYLE.

TUNE—"Miss Forbes's Farewell to Banff."

The beautiful estate of Ballochmyle, which is situated on the Ayr, in the neighbourhood of Mauchline, was at this period of the poet's life transferred from the family of the Whitefoords (whose departure he has lamented in the lines on "The Braes of Ballochmyle") to Mr Claud Alexander, a gentleman who had made a large fortune as paymaster-general of the East India Company's troops at Bengal; and having just taken up his residence at the mansion-house, his sister, Miss Wilhelmina Alexander, was one day walking out through the grounds, which appear to have been a favourite haunt of Burns's, when she accidentally encountered him in a musing attitude, with his shoulder leaning against a tree. As the grounds were thought to be strictly private, the lady appears to have been somewhat startled; but, having recovered herself, passed on, and thought no more of the matter. A short time afterwards, however, she was reminded of the circumstance by receiving a letter from the poet, enclosing the song. "I had roved out," he says, "as chance directed in the favourite haunts of my Muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills: not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. Such was the scene, and such was the hour—when, in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the fairest pieces of nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape or met a poet's eye. The enclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might have been expected from such a scene." Much to the mortification of Burns, however, the lady took no notice of either the letter or the song, although she ultimately displayed a high sense of the honour which the genius of the poet had conferred on her. She died unmarried in 1843, at the age of eighty-eight.

'TWAS even—the dewy fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang,
The zephyrs wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang :
In every glen the mavis sang,
All nature listening seem'd the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang,
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,
My heart rejoiced in Nature's joy,
When musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanced to spy;
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like Nature's vernal smile,
Perfection whisper'd, passing by,
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
And sweet is night in autumn mild;
When roving through the garden gay,
Or wandering in the lonely wild:
But woman, Nature's darling child!
There all her charms she does compile;
Even there her other works are foil'd
By the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

Oh! had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Though shelter'd in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotland's plain:
Through weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonny lass o' Ballochmyle!

Then pride might climb the slippery steep,
Where fame and honours lofty shine;
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
Or downward seek the Indian mine;
Give me the cot below the pine,
To tend the flocks, or till the soil,
And every day have joys divine
With the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

THE BONNY BANKS OF AYR.

TUNE—"Roslin Castle."

The poet, says Professor Walker, having been on a visit to a family where he had enjoyed much elegant and social pleasure, and which he thought was never to be renewed, as he was about to depart for the West Indies, "on his way home had to cross a wide stretch of solitary moor; and, depressed by the contrasted gloom of his prospects, the aspect of nature harmonised with his feelings: it was a lowering and heavy evening in autumn. The wind was up, and whistled through the rushes and long speargrass which bent before it. The clouds were driving across the sky; and cold pelting showers at intervals added discomfort of body to cheerlessness of mind. Under these circumstances and in this frame, Burns composed the following song:"—

THE gloomy night is gathering fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast;
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain:

The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveys meet secure;
While here I wander, prest with care
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The Autumn mourns her ripening corn
By early Winter's ravage torn;
Across her pla[illegible], azure sky,
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave—
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonny banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billow's roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Though death in every shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear!
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierced with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonny banks of Ayr.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves!
Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these, my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell the bonny banks of Ayr!

THE BANKS OF DOON.

FIRST VERSION

The following song relates to an incident in real life—an unhappy love-tale. The unfortunate heroine was a beautiful and accomplished woman, the daughter and heiress of a gentleman of fortune in Carrick. Having been deserted by her lover, the son of a wealthy Wigtonshire proprietor, to whom she had born a child without the sanction of the Church, she is said to have died of a broken heart. The poet composed a second version of this song in 1792, for the *Scots Musical Museum*; but it lacks the pathos and simplicity of the present one. (See p. 404.)

Ye flowery banks o' bonny Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou 'lt break my heart, thou bonny bird
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luve was true.

Thou 'lt break my heart, thou bonny bird
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonny Doon,
To see the woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its love,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Frae off its thorny tree;
And my fause luver staw [1] the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

THE AMERICAN WAR.

A FRAGMENT.

TUNE—"Killiecrankie."

The following ballad was composed at a period when the poet's political opinions had scarcely developed themselves, and when, as Dr Blair remarked, they still "smelt of the smithy." It is curious, however, as an illustration of the mode in which the rustic mind is apt to view the most important military and political matters.

WHEN Guildford good our pilot stood,
And did our helm thraw,[2] man,
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the maskin'-pat,[3]
And in the sea did jaw,[4] * man;
And did nae less, in full Congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

Then through the lakes, Montgomery † takes,
I wat he wasna slaw, man!
Down Lowrie's burn ‡ he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca', man:
But yet, what-reck, he, at Quebec,
Montgomery-like § did fa', man:
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en'mies a', man.

---

[1] Stole. [2] Turn. [3] Tea-pot. [4] Throw.

* The English Parliament having imposed an excise duty upon tea imported into North America, the East India Company sent several ships laden with that article to Boston; but, on their arrival, the natives went on board by force of arms, and emptied all the tea into the sea.

† General Montgomery invaded Canada in 1775, and took Montreal, the British general, Sir Guy Carleton, retiring before him.

‡ A pseudonym for the St Lawrence.

§ A compliment to the poet's patrons, the Montgomeries of Coilsfield

Poor Tammy Gage, within a cage,
Was kept at Boston ha', man;*
Till Willie Howe took o'er the knowe
For Philadelphia, man;
Wi' sword and gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian bluid to draw, man;
But at New York, wi' knife and fork,
Sir-loin he hacked sma', man.†

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur and whip,
Till Fraser brave did fa', man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In Saratoga shaw,[1] man.‡
Cornwallis fought as long 's he dought,[2]
And did the buckskins claw, man;
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

Then Montague, and Guildford too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sackville doure,[3] wha stood the stoure,[4]
The German chief to thraw,[5] man;
For Paddy Burke, like ony Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;
And Charlie Fox threw by the box,
And loosed his tinkler jaw,§ man. ‖

Then Rockingham took up the game,
Till death did on him ca' man;
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
Conform to gospel law, man;
Saint Stephen's boys wi' jarring noise,
They did his measures thraw, man,
For North and Fox united stocks,
And bore him to the wa', man.

Then clubs and hearts were Charlie's cartes,
He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,
Led him a sair *faux pas*, man;¶

---

1 Wood. 2 Could. 3 Stubborn.
4 Dust. 5 Thwart.

* An allusion to General Gage's being besieged in Boston by General Washington.

† Alluding to an inroad made by Howe, when a large number of cattle was destroyed.

‡ An allusion to the surrender of General Burgoyne's army at Saratoga.

§ Free-spoken tongue. Tinkers are proverbial for their power of speech.

‖ By the union of Lord North and Mr Fox, in 1783, the heads of the celebrated coalition, Lord Shelburne was compelled to resign.

¶ An allusion to Mr Fox's India Bill, which threw him out of office in December 1783.

The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,[1]
On Chatham's boy did ca', man;
And Scotland drew her pipe, and blew,
"Up, Willie, waur[2] them a', man!"

Behind the throne then Grenville 's gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While slee Dundas aroused the class
Be-north the Roman wa', man:
And Chatham's wraith,[3] in heavenly graith,
(Inspirèd Bardies saw, man;)
Wi' kindling eyes cried, "Willie, rise!"
"Would I hae fear'd them a', man?"

But, word and blow, North, Fox, and Co.,
Gowff'd[4] Willie like a ba', man,
Till Suthrons raise, and coost[5] their claes
Behind him in a raw, man;
And Caledon threw by the drone,
And did her whittle[6] draw, man;
And swoor fu' rude, through dirt and bluid,
To make it guid in law, man.

* * * * *

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

TUNE—"The Birks of Aberfeldy."

The poet tells us he composed this song on a visit which he paid to the beautiful falls of Moness, at Aberfeldy, in Perthshire, while on his way to Inverness. The air is old and sprightly.

BONNY lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go;
Bonny lassie, will ye go
To the birks[7] of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks[8] on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays;
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blithely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

---

[1] Cheers. [2] Beat. [3] Ghost.
[4] Knocked him about. The phrase properly refers to the game of golf.
[5] Doffed. [6] Knife. [7] Birches—Birch-wood. [8] Glances

The braes ascend, like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,[1]
The birks of Aberfeldy.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising, weets wi' misty showers
The birks of Aberfeldy.

Let Fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

THE BONNY LASS OF ALBANY.

TUNE—"Mary's Dream."

The following song," says Chambers, "is printed from a manuscript book in Burns's hand-writing, in the possession of Mr B. Nightingale of London." The heroine was the natural daughter of Prince Charles Edward, by Clementina Walkinshaw, with whom, it is well-known, he lived for many years. The Prince afterwards caused her to be legitimated by a deed of the parliament of Paris in 1787, and styled her the Duchess of Albany.

MY heart is wae, and unco wae,[2]
To think upon the raging sea
That roars between her gardens green
And the bonny Lass of Albany.

This lovely maid 's of royal blood
That ruled Albion's kingdoms three,
But oh, alas! for her bonny face,
They 've wrang'd the Lass of Albany.

In the rolling tide of spreading Clyde
There sits an isle of high degree,
And a town of fame whose princely name
Should grace the Lass of Albany.

But there 's a youth, a witless youth,
That fills the place where she should be;
We 'll send him o'er to his native shore,
And bring our ain sweet Albany.

Alas the day, and wo the day,
A false usurper wan the gree[3]
Who now commands the towers and lands—
The royal right of Albany.

---

1 Woods. 2 Sad. 3 Superiority.

We 'll daily pray, we 'll nightly pray,
On bended knees most fervently,
The time may come, with pipe and drum.
We 'll welcome hame fair Albany.

LADY ONLIE.

TUNE—"Ruffian's Rant."

This is an old song improved by Burns for the *Museum*.

A' THE lads o' Thorniebank,
When they gae to the shore o' Bucky,[1]
They 'll step in and tak a pint
Wi' Lady Onlie, honest Lucky![2]

Lady Onlie, honest Lucky,
Brews guid ale at shore o' Bucky;
I wish her sale for her guid ale,
The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.

Her house sae bien,[3] her curch[4] sae clean,
I wat she is a dainty chucky;[5]
And cheerlie blinks the ingle-gleed[6]
Of Lady Onlie, honest Lucky!

Lady Onlie, honest Lucky,
Brews guid ale at shore o' Bucky;
I wish her sale for her guid ale,
The best on a' the shore o' Bucky

BLITHE WAS SHE.

TUNE—"Andrew and his Cutty Gun."

The heroine of this song was Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, a lovely young creature of eighteen, and already distinguished by the appellation of "The Flower of Strathmore." The poet met her while on a visit to the house of her uncle, Sir William Murray of Ochtertyre, and seems to have been charmed by her beauty and affability. She subsequently became the wife of Mr Smythe of Methven, one of the judges of the Court of Session.

BLITHE, blithe, and merry was she,
Blithe was she butt and ben:[7]
Blithe by the banks of Earn,
And blithe in Glenturit glen.

---

[1] Buckhaven. [2] Goodwife [3] Well-filled.
[4] Kerchief—a covering for the head. [5] Dear. [6] Blazing fire
[7] In kitchen and parlour.

By Auchtertyre grows the aik,[1]
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;[2]
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.

Her looks were like a flower in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She trippèd by the banks of Earn,
As light 's a bird upon a thorn.

Her bonny face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lea;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet,
As was the blink o' Phemie's ee.

The Highland hills I 've wander'd wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I hae been;
But Phemie was the blithest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.

BONNY DUNDEE.

TUNE—"Bonny Dundee."

This song appeared in the first volume of the *Museum*. The second verse alone is Burns's, the first having been taken from a very old homely ditty.

OH, whare did ye get that hauver[3]-meal bannock?
Oh, silly blind body, oh, dinna ye see?
I gat it frae a brisk young sodger laddie,
Between Saint Johnston and bonny Dundee.
Oh gin I saw the laddie that gae me 't!
Aft has he doudled[4] me upon his knee;
May Heaven protect my bonny Scots laddie,
And send him safe hame to his baby and me!

My blessin 's upon thy sweet wee lippie,
My blessin 's upon thy bonny eebree!
Thy smiles are sae like my blithe sodger laddie,
Thou 's aye be dearer and dearer to me!
But I 'll big a bower on yon bonny banks,
Where Tay rins wimplin' by sae clear;
And I 'll cleed thee in the tartan sae fine,
And mak thee a man like thy daddie dear.

---

1 Oak 2 Birch-woods. 3 Oat. 4 Dandled

THE JOYFUL WIDOWER.

TUNE—"Maggy Lauder."

I MARRIED with a scolding wife,
The fourteenth of November;
She made me weary of my life
By one unruly member.
Long did I bear the heavy yoke,
And many griefs attended;
But, to my comfort be it spoke,
Now, now her life is ended.

We lived full one-and-twenty years
As man and wife together;
At length from me her course she steer'd
And 's gone I know not whither:
Would I could guess, I do profess,
I speak, and do not flatter,
Of all the women in the world,
I never could come at her.

Her body is bestowèd well,
A handsome grave does hide her;
But sure her soul is not in hell,
The deil could ne'er abide her.
I rather think she is aloft,
And imitating thunder;
For why, methinks I hear her voice
Tearing the clouds asunder.

A ROSEBUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

TUNE—"The Rosebud."

This song was composed in honour of the young lady to whom the poet addressed the lines beginning, "Beauteous rosebud, young and gay." She was Miss Jenny Cruikshank, daughter of Mr William Cruikshank, one of the masters of the High School of Edinburgh, a friend of Burns's, and at whose house he resided during one of his visits to the metropolis. Being a proficient in music, the young lady appears to have charmed the poet by her skill in that art. She subsequently became the wife of a Mr Henderson, a legal practitioner in Jedburgh.

A ROSEBUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-enclosèd bawk,[1]
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.
Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

[1] An open space in a cornfield.

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning.
She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jenny fair!
On trembling string, or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tends thy early morning.
So thou, sweet rosebud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning.

BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S STORMS.

TUNE—"Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercairny."

The two following songs were written in praise of Miss Margaret Chalmers, a relative of the poet's friend, Mr Gavin Hamilton. Burns first became acquainted with the young lady at the house of Dr Blacklock; and being of a quiet, amiable disposition, and possessed of that "excellent thing in woman," a delightful voice, she appears to have left an abiding impression on the heart of the susceptible poet, who called her "one of the most accomplished of women," and frequently spoke of her with more than common warmth.

WHERE, braving angry Winter's storms,
The lofty Ochils rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
First blest my wondering eyes;
As one who by some savage stream,
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd, doubly marks its beam,
With art's most polish'd blaze.

Blest be the wild sequester'd shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their power!
The tyrant Death, with grim control,
May seize my fleeting breath;
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

MY PEGGY'S FACE.

TUNE—"My Peggy's Face."

MY Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of humankind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway!
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms—
These are all immortal charms.

THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.

TUNE—"Bhanarach dhonn a chruidh."

"These verses," says Burns, in his notes in the *Musical Museum*, "were composed on a charming girl, Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James M. Adair, physician. She is sister to my worthy friend, Gavin Hamilton of Mauchline, and was born on the banks of the Ayr; but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon." The poet, it has been said, wished to be something more than a mere admirer of this young lady; but

"Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig;"

for the music of his lyre appears to have fallen on ears that would not charm.

How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon,
With green-spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair!
But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.

Mild be the sun on this sweet-blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn, as it bathes in the dew!
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew.

Oh, spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing, as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile, that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!

Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England, triumphant, display her proud rose:
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL.

TUNE—"M'Pherson's Rant."

This fine song which Lockhart terms "a grand lyric," and Carlyle "a wild, stormful song that dwells in ear and mind with strange tenacity," was designed by the poet as an improvement of a well-known old ditty entitled, "Macpherson's Lament," and which is said to have been written by a Highland freebooter a night or two before his execution. As this hero's history contains some elements of interest, we borrow the following account of him from Mr Robert Chambers's recent edition of the poet's works:—"James Macpherson was a noted Highland freebooter of uncommon personal strength, and an excellent performer on the violin. After holding the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray in fear for some years, he was seized by Duff of Braco, ancestor of the Earl of Fife, and tried before the sheriff of Banffshire, (November 7, 1700,) along with certain gipsies who had been taken in his company. In the prison, while he lay under sentence of death, he composed a song and an appropriate air, the former commencing thus:—

'I've spent my time in rioting,
Debauch'd my health and strength;
I squander'd fast as pillage came,
And fell to shame at length.
But dantonly, and wantonly,
And rantingly I'll gae;
I'll play a tune, and dance it roun'
Beneath the gallows-tree.'

When brought to the place of execution, on the Gallows-hill of Banff, (Nov. 16,) he played the tune on his violin, and then asked if any friend was present who would accept the instrument as a gift at his hands. No one coming forward, he indignantly broke the violin on his knee, and threw away the fragments; after which he submitted to his fate. The traditionary accounts of Macpherson's immense prowess are justified by his sword, which is still preserved in Duff House, at Banff, and is an implement of great length and weight—as well as by his bones, which were found a few years ago, and were allowed by all who saw them to be much stronger than the bones of ordinary men."

FAREWELL, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows-tree.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dauntingly gaed he;
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Below the gallows-tree.

Oh! what is death but parting breath?—
On mony a bloody plain
I've dared his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again!

Untie these bands from off my hands,
And bring to me my sword!
And there 's no a man in all Scotland
But I 'll brave him at a word.

I 've lived a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart
And not avenged be.

Now farewell light—thou sunshine bright
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!

WHISTLE, AND I 'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD.

This version of an old fragment the poet composed for the second volume of the *Museum;* but he afterwards altered and extended it for Thomson's collection

Oh, whistle, and I 'll come to you, my lad;
Oh, whistle, and I 'll come to you, my lad:
Though father and mother should baith gae mad,
Oh, whistle, and I 'll come to you, my lad.

Come down the back stairs when ye come to court me,
Come down the back stairs when ye come to court me:
Come down the back stairs and let naebody see
And come as ye werena coming to me.

STAY, MY CHARMER.

Tune—"An Gille dubh ciar dhubh."

Stay, my charmer, can you leave me?
Cruel, cruel to deceive me!
Well you know how much you grieve me:
Cruel charmer, can you go?
Cruel charmer, can you go?

By my love so ill requited;
By the faith you fondly plighted;
By the pangs of lovers slighted!
Do not, do not leave me so.
Do not, do not leave me so!

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.

William, fourth Viscount of Strathallan, whom the poet celebrates in these lines, fell on the rebel side at Culloden in 1746. The poet, perhaps ignorant of this fact, speaks of him as having survived the battle, and fled for safety to some mountain fastness.

THICKEST night, o'erhang my dwelling!
Howling tempests, o'er me rave!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
Still surround my lonely cave!

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
Suit not my distracted mind.

In the cause of right engagèd,
Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly wagèd,
But the heavens denied success.

Farewell, fleeting, fickle treasure,
'Tween Misfortune and Folly shared!
Farewell Peace, and farewell Pleasure!
Farewell flattering man's regard!

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope that dare attend,
The wide world is all before us—
But a world without a friend!

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.

TUNE—"Morag."

LOUD blaw the frosty breezes,
The snaw the mountains cover;
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young Highland rover
Far wanders nations over.
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
May Heaven be his warden;
Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
And bonny Castle-Gordon!

The trees now naked groaning,
Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,
The birdies dowie[1] moaning,
Shall a' be blithely singing,
And every flower be springing.

[1] Sadly.

Sae I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
When by his mighty warden
My youth 's return'd to fair Strathspey.
And bonny Castle-Gordon.

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.

TUNE—"Macgregor of Ruara's Lament."

"I composed these verses," says Burns, "on Miss Isabella M'Leod of Raasay alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of London, who shot himself out of sheer heartbreak at some mortification he suffered from the deranged state of his finances."

RAVING winds around her blowing,
Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella stray'd deploring :—
"Farewell hours that late did measure
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
Hail thou gloomy night of sorrow,
Cheerless night that knows no morrow!

"O'er the past too fondly wandering,
On the hopeless future pondering;
Chilly Grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell Despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to Misery most distressing,
Oh, how gladly I'd resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!"

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN

TUNE—"Druimion Dubh."

"I composed these verses," says the poet, "out of compliment to a Mrs Maclachlan, whose husband was an officer in the East Indies."

MUSING on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me;
Wearying Heaven in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be.

Hope and Fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to Nature's law;
Whispering spirits round my pillow
Talk of him that 's far awa'.

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy Day to you is dear.

Gentle Night, do thou befriend me;
Downy Sleep, the curtain draw:
Spirits kind, again attend me,—
Talk of him that 's far awa'!

BONNY PEGGY ALISON.

TUNE—"Braes o' Balquhidder."

The heroine of this song is thought to have been the "Montgomery's Peggy" of the song of that name, the subject of other songs, and the object of many months' fruitless wooing.

I 'LL kiss thee yet, yet,
And I 'll kiss thee o'er again;
And I 'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonny Peggy Alison!

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,
I ever mair defy them, O;
Young kings upon their hansel[1] throne
Are nae sae blest as I am, O!

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure, O,
I seek nae mair o' Heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure, O!

And by thy een, sae bonny blue,
I swear I 'm thine for ever, O!—
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never, O!

THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.

TUNE—"Captain O'Kean."

"Yesterday," wrote Burns to his friend Cleghorn, "as I was riding through a tract of melancholy, joyless moors, between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, 'Captain O'Kean,' coming at length into my head, I tried these words to it. I am tolerably pleased with the verses; but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the

[1] New-won.

music." Cleghorn answered that the words delighted him, and fitted the tune exactly. "I wish," added he, "that you would send me a verse or two more, and, if you have no objection, I would have it in the Jacobite style. Suppose it should be sung after the fatal field of Culloden, by the unfortunate Charles." The poet took his friend's advice, and infused a Jacobite spirit into the first verse as well as the second.

THE small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet winds through the vale;
The hawthorn trees blow, in the dew of the morning,
And wild scatter'd cowslips bedeck the green dale:
But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
While the lingering moments are number'd by care?
No flowers gaily springing, nor birds sweetly singing,
Can soothe the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dared, could it merit their malice,
A king, and a father, to place on his throne?
His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I can find none
But 'tis not my sufferings thus wretched,—forlorn,
My brave gallant friends! 'tis your ruin I mourn;
Your deeds proved so loyal in hot bloody trial—
Alas! can I make you no sweeter return?

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW.

TUNE—"Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey."

"I composed this song," says the poet, "out of compliment to Mrs Burns, during our honeymoon."

OF a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonny lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,[1]
And mony a hill between;
But day and night, my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There 's not a bonny flower that springs
By fountain, shaw,[2] or green,
There 's not a bonny bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.*

[1] Roll. [2] Wood.

* The two following stanzas were written some years afterwards, by Mr John Hamilton, musicseller, Edinburgh, and from their simplicity and beauty are really worthy of forming the corollary to this fine song:—

OH, WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL.

TUNE—"My love is lost to me."

This song was also produced in honour of Mrs Burns, shortly before she took up her residence at Ellisland as the poet's wife. It is thought to have been composed while he was one day gazing towards the hill of Corsincon, at the head of Nithsdale, and beyond which, though at some distance, was the quiet vale where lived his "bonny Jean."

OH, were I on Parnassus' hill!
Or had of Helicon my fill;
That I might catch poetic skill
To sing how dear I love thee.
But Nith maun be my Muse's well,
My Muse maun be thy bonny sel;

"Oh, blaw, ye westlin' winds, blaw saft
Amang the leafy trees,
Wi' balmy gale, frae hill and dale,
Bring hame the laden bees;
And bring the lassie back to me
That's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae smile o' her wad banish care,
Sae charming is my Jean.

"What sighs and vows amang the knowes
Hae pass'd atween us twa!
How fond to meet, how wae to part,
That night she gaed awa'!
The powers aboon can only ken,
To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
As my sweet lovely Jean!"

The two following were also written as an addition to this song by Mr William Reid, of the firm of Brash and Reid, booksellers, Glasgow, and have sometimes been printed as the poet's:—

"Upon the banks o' flowing Clyde
The lassies busk[1] them braw;
But when their best they hae put on,
My Jeanie dings[2] them a':
In hamely weeds she far exceeds
The fairest o' the town;
Baith sage and gay confess it sae,
Though drest in russet gown.

"The gamesome lamb, that sucks its dam,
Mair harmless canna be;
She has nae faut, (if sic ye ca't,)
Except her love for me;
The sparkling dew, o' clearest hue,
Is like her shining een:
In shape and air nane can compare
Wi' my sweet lovely Jean."

---

1 Dress. 2 Excels.

On Corsincon I'll glower[1] and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!
For a' the lee-lang simmer's day
I couldna sing, I couldna say,
How much, how dear, I love thee.
I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp,[2] thy limbs sae clean,[3]
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
By heaven and earth I love thee!

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;
And aye I muse and sing thy name—
I only live to love thee.
Though I were doom'd to wander on
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run;
Till then—and then I'd love thee.

THE FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE.

TUNE—"Killiecrankie."

The poet's brother, Gilbert Burns, gives the following account of the origin of this ballad:—"When Mr Cunninghame of Enterkin came to his estate, two mansion-houses on it, Enterkin and Annbank, were both in a ruinous state. Wishing to introduce himself with some *eclat* to the county, he got temporary erections made on the banks of the Ayr, tastefully decorated with shrubs and flowers, for a supper and ball, to which most of the respectable families in the county were invited. It was a novelty in the county, and attracted much notice. A dissolution of parliament was soon expected, and this festivity was thought to be an introduction to a canvass for representing the county. Several other candidates were spoken of, particularly Sir John Whitefoord, then residing at Cloncaird, commonly pronounced Glencaird, and Mr Boswell, the well-known biographer of Dr Johnson. The political views of this festive assemblage, which are alluded to in the ballad, if they ever existed, were, however, laid aside, as Mr Cunninghame did not canvass the county."

OH, wha will to Saint Stephen's house,
To do our errands there, man?
Oh, wha will to Saint Stephen's house,
O' th' merry lads of Ayr, man?
Or will we send a man-o'-law?
Or will we send a sodger?
Or him wha led o'er Scotland a'
The meikle[4] Ursa-Major?

Come, will ye court a noble lord,
Or buy a score o' lairds, man?
For worth and honour pawn their word,
Their vote shall be Glencaird's, man?

---

[1] Stare. [2] Small. [3] Well-shaped. [4] Great.

Ane gies them coin, ane gies them wine,
Anither gies them clatter;[1]
Anubank, wha guess'd the ladies' taste,
He gies a Fête Champêtre.

When Love and Beauty heard the news,
The gay greenwoods amang, man;
Where gathering flowers and busking[2] bowers
They heard the blackbird's sang, man;
A vow, they seal'd it with a kiss,
Sir Politics to fetter,
As theirs alone, the patent-bliss,
To hold a Fête Champêtre.

Then mounted Mirth, on gleesome wing,
O'er hill and dale she flew, man;
Ilk wimpling burn, ilk crystal spring,
Ilk glen and shaw[3] she knew, man:
She summon'd every social sprite,
That sports by wood or water,
On the bonny banks of Ayr to meet,
And keep this Fête Champêtre.

Cauld Boreas, wi' his boisterous crew,
Were bound to stakes like kye,[4] man;
And Cynthia's car, o' silver fu',
Clamb up the starry sky, man:
Reflected beams dwell in the streams,
Or down the current shatter;
The western breeze steals through the trees
To view this Fête Champêtre.

How many a robe sae gaily floats!
What sparkling jewels glance, man!
To Harmony's enchanting notes,
As moves the mazy dance, man.
The echoing wood, the winding flood,
Like paradise did glitter,
When angels met, at Adam's yett,[5]
To hold their Fête Champêtre.

When Politics came there, to mix
And make his ether-stane, man!
He circled round the magic ground,
But entrance found he nane, man:*
He blush'd for shame, he quat his name,
Forswore it, every letter,
Wi' humble prayer to join and share
This festive Fête Champêtre.

---

[1] Talk. [2] Dressing. [3] Wood. [4] Cattle. [5] Gate.

* "Alluding to a superstition," says Chambers, "which represents adders as forming annually from their slough certain little annular stones of streaked colouring, which are occasionally found, and the real origin of which is supposed by antiquaries to be Druidical."

THE DAY RETURNS.

TUNE—"Seventh of November."

In a letter to Miss Chalmers, an intimate female friend of the poet's, he says regarding this song:—"One of the most tolerable things I have done for some time is these two stanzas I made to an air a musical gentleman of my acquaintance [Captain Riddel of Glenriddel] composed for the anniversary of his wedding day."

THE day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet,
Though winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer sun was half sae sweet.
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line;
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heaven gave me more—it made thee mine!

While day and night can bring delight,
Or nature aught of pleasure give,
While joys above my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone, I live!
When that grim foe of life below
Comes in between to make us part,
The iron hand that breaks our band
It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart.

THE DISCREET HINT.

"LASS, when your mither is frae hame,
May I but be sae bauld
As come to your bower window,
And creep in frae the cauld?
As come to your bower window,
And when its cauld and wat,
Warm me in thy fair bosom—
Sweet lass, may I do that?"

"Young man, gin ye should be sae kind,
When our gudewife's frae hame,
As come to my bower window,
Whare I am laid my lane,
To warm thee in my bosom,—
Tak tent,[1] I'll tell thee what,
The way to me lies through the kirk—
Young man, do ye hear that?"

---

[1] Heed.

THE LAZY MIST.

TUNE—"Here's a health to my true love."

THE lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark-winding rill!
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear!
As Autumn to Winter resigns the pale year.
The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of Summer is flown:
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick Time is flying, how keen Fate pursues!

How long I have lived—but how much lived in vain!
How little of life's scanty span may remain!
What aspects old Time, in his progress, has worn!
What ties, cruel Fate in my bosom has torn!
How foolish, or worse, till our summit is gain'd!
And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
This life's not worth having with all it can give—
For something beyond it poor man sure must live.

I HAE A WIFE O' MY AIN.

TUNE—"Naebody."

The following sprightly lines were written shortly after the poet had welcomed home his wife to his new house on the farm of Ellisland—the first winter he spent in which he has described as the happiest of his life.

I HAE a wife o' my ain—
I'll partake wi' naebody;
I'll tak cuckold frae nane,
I'll gie cuckold to naebody.
I hae a penny to spend,
There—thanks to naebody;
I hae naething to lend—
I'll borrow frae naebody.

I am naebody's lord—
I'll be slave to naebody;
I hae a guid braid sword,
I'll tak dunts [1] frae naebody;
I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for naebody;
If naebody care for me,
I'll care for naebody.

---

[1] Blows.

AULD LANG SYNE.

Burns has described this as an old song and tune which had often thrilled through his soul; and in communicating it to his friend George Thomson, he professed to have recovered it from an old man's singing; and exclaimed regarding it—"Light be the turf on the breast of the Heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment!" The probability is, however, that the poet was indulging in a little mystification on the subject, and that the entire song was his own composition. The second and third verses—describing the happy days of youth—are his beyond a doubt.

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we 've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae morning sun till dine:
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here 's a hand, my trusty fiere,[1]
And gies a hand o' thine;
And we 'll tak a right guid willie-waught,[2]
For auld lang syne!

And surely ye 'll be your pint-stoup,
And surely I 'll be mine;
And we 'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

MY BONNY MARY.

TUNE—"Go fetch to me a pint o' wine."

The first four lines of this song are from an old ballad composed in 1636, by Alexander Lesly of Edin, on Doveran side, grandfather to the celebrated Archbishop Sharpe—the rest are Burns's.

GO fetch to me a pint o' wine,
And fill it in a silver tassie,[3]
That I may drink, before I go,
A service to my bonny lassie;

[1] Friend. [2] Draught. [3] Cup.

The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun leave my bonny Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are rankèd ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it 's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shout o' war that 's heard afar—
It 's leaving thee, my bonny Mary.

MY HEART WAS ANCE AS BLITHE AND FREE.

TUNE—"To the weavers gin ye go."

The chorus of this song is taken from a very old ditty, the rest is the production of the poet.

MY heart was ance as blithe and free
As simmer days were lang,
But a bonny westlin' weaver lad
Has gart me change my sang.

To the weavers gin ye go, fair maids,
To the weavers gin ye go;
I rede[1] you right, gang ne'er at night
To the weavers gin ye go.

My mither sent me to the town,
To warp[2] a plaiden wab;
But the weary, weary warpin' o 't
Has gart[3] me sigh and sab.

A bonny westlin' weaver lad
Sat working at his loom;
He took my heart as wi' a net,
In every knot and thrum.[4]

I sat beside my warpin'-wheel,
And aye I ca'd it roun';
But every shot and every knock,
My heart it gae a stoun.[5]

The moon was sinking in the west
Wi' visage pale and wan,
As my bonny westlin' weaver lad
Convoy'd me through the glen.

---

[1] Warn. [2] Prepare for the loom. [3] Made.
[4] Thread. [5] Start.

But what was said, or what was done.
Shame fa' me gin I tell;
But, oh! I fear the kintra[1] soon
Will ken as weel's mysel.

BRAW LADS OF GALA WATER.

TUNE—"Gala Water."

The air and chorus of this song are both very old. This version Burns wrote for the *Scots Musical Museum;* but he was so enamoured with the air, that he afterwards wrote another set of words to it for his friend Thomson, which will be found at p. 423.

BRAW, braw lads of Gala Water;
Oh, braw lads of Gala Water:
I'll kilt my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love through the water.

Sae fair her hair, sae brent[2] her brow,
Sae bonny blue her een, my dearie;
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou',
The mair I kiss she's aye my dearie.

O'er yon bank and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather;
I'll kilt[3] my coats aboon my knee,
And follow my love through the water.

Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost her silken snood,*
That cost her mony a blirt and bleary.[4]

HER DADDIE FORBAD.

TUNE—"Jumpin' John."

HER daddie forbad, her minnie forbad;
Forbidden she wadna be:
She wadna trow't the browst she brew'd[5]
Wad taste sae bitterlie.

---

[1] Country. [2] High and smooth. [3] Tuck up and fix. [4] Sigh and tear.
[5] She wouldn't believe the drink she brew'd.

* The snood or ribband with which a Scottish lass braided her hair had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or *coif*, when she passed by marriage into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood nor advance to the graver dignity of the curch.—SCOTT

The lang lad they ca' Jumpin' John
Beguiled the bonny lassie;
The lang lad they ca' Jumpin' John
Beguiled the bonny lassie.

A cow and a calf, a ewe and a hauf,
And thretty guid shillin's and three;
A very guid tocher,[1] a cotter-man's dochter,
The lass with the bonny black ee.

HEY, THE DUSTY MILLER.

TUNE—"The Dusty Miller."

HEY, the dusty miller,
And his dusty coat;
He will win a shilling
Or he spend a groat.
Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour,
Dusty was the kiss
I got frae the miller.

Hey, the dusty miller,
And his dusty sack;
Leeze me on the calling
Fills the dusty peck.
Fills the dusty peck,
Brings the dusty siller;
I wad gie my coatie
For the dusty miller.

THENIEL MENZIE'S BONNY MARY.

TUNE—"The Ruffian's Rant."

IN coming by the brig o' Dye,
At Darlet we a blink did tarry;
As day was dawin in the sky,
We drank a health to bonny Mary.

Theniel Menzie's bonny Mary,
Theniel Menzie's bonny Mary;
Charlie Gregor tint[2] his plaidie,
Kissin' Theniel's bonny Mary.

[1] Dower. [2] Lost

Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,
  Her haffet[1] locks as brown 's a berry;
And aye they dimpl't wi' a smile,
  The rosy cheeks o' bonny Mary.

We lap and danced the lee-lang day,
  Till piper lads were wae and weary
But Charlie gat the spring to pay,
  For kissin' Theniel's bonny Mary.

WEARY FA' YOU, DUNCAN GRAY.

TUNE—"Duncan Gray."

This first version of an old song was written for the *Museum*. The poet afterwards composed another and better version for the collection of his friend Thomson, which will be found at p. 409.

WEARY fa' you, Duncan Gray—
  Ha, ha, the girdin'[2] o 't!
Wae gae by you, Duncan Gray—
  Ha, ha, the girdin' o 't!
When a' the lave[3] gae to their play,
Then I maun sit the lee-lang day,
And jog the cradle wi my tae,
  And a' for the girdin' o 't.

Bonny was the Lammas moon—
  Ha, ha, the girdin' o 't!
Glowerin' a' the hills aboon—
  Ha, ha, the girdin' o 't!
The girdin' brak, the beast cam down,
I tint[4] my curch[5] and baith my shoon -
Ah! Duncan, ye're an unco loon—
  Wae on the bad girdin' o 't!

But, Duncan, gin ye 'll keep your aith,
  Ha, ha, the girdin' o 't!—
I'se bless you wi' my hindmost breath—
  Ha, ha, the girdin' o 't!
Duncan, gin ye 'll keep your aith—
The beast again can bear us baith,
And auld Mess John will mend the skaith,[6]
  And clout[7] the bad gird[illegible] o 't.

---

[1] Temple. [2] Binding. [3] Others. [4] Lost
[5] Cap. [6] Harm. [7] Patch up

THE PLOUGHMAN.

TUNE—"Up wi' the ploughman."

The fourth and fifth verses only of this piece are by Burns, the remainder by some older writer.

THE ploughman he 's a bonny lad,
His mind is ever true, jo;
His garters knit below his knee.
His bonnet it is blue, jo.

Then up wi' my ploughman lad,
And hey my merry ploughman!
Of a' the trades that I do ken,
Commend me to the ploughman.

My ploughman he comes hame at e'en,
He 's often wat and weary;
Cast aff the wat, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my dearie!

I will wash my ploughman's hose,
And I will dress his o'erlay;[1]
I will mak my ploughman's bed,
And cheer him late and early.

I hae been east, I hae been west,
I hae been at Saint Johnston;
The bonniest sight that e'er I saw
Was the ploughman laddie dancin'.

Snaw-white stockin's on his legs,
And siller buckles glancin';
A guid blue bonnet on his head—
And oh, but he was handsome!

Commend me to the barn-yard,
And the corn-mou,* man;
I never gat my coggie fou,
Till I met wi' the ploughman.

LANDLADY, COUNT THE LAWIN.

TUNE—"Hey Tutti, Taiti."

The first two verses of this song were supplied by Burns; the others belong to a political ditty of earlier date.

---

[1] Cravat.

* The recess left in the stack of corn in the Barn as the sheaves are removed to the thrashing-floor.

LANDLADY, count the lawin,[1]
The day is near the dawin;
Ye 're a' blind drunk, boys,
And I 'm but jolly fou.[2]
Hey tutti, taiti,
How tutti, taiti—
Wha 's fou now?

Cog and ye were aye fou,
Cog and ye were aye fou,
I wad sit and sing to you,
If ye were aye fou.

Weel may ye a' be!
Ill may we never see!
God bless the king, boys,
And the companie!
Hey tutti, taiti,
How tutti, taiti—
Wha 's fou now?

TO DAUNTON ME.

TUNE—"To daunton me."

THE blude-red rose at Yule may blaw,
The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,
The frost may freeze the deepest sea;
But an auld man shall never daunton[3] me.

To daunton me, and me so young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue,
That is the thing you ne'er shall see;
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

For a' his meal and a' his maut,
For a' his fresh beef and his saut,
For a' his gold and white monie,
An auld man shall never daunton me.

His gear[4] may buy him kye and yowes,
His gear may buy him glens and knowes;
But me he shall not buy nor fee,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

He hirples[5] twa-fauld as he dow,[6]
Wi' his teethless gab[7] and his auld beld pow,[8]
And the rain dreeps down frae his red bleer'd ee,
That auld man shall never daunton me.

---

[1] Reckoning. [2] Full. [3] Rule—intimidate. [4] Wealth.
[5] Limps. [6] Can. [7] Mouth. [8] Head.

COME BOAT ME O'ER TO CHARLIE.

TUNE—"O'er the Water to Charlie."

COME boat me o'er, come row me o'er,
Come boat me o'er to Charlie;
I'll gie John Ross another bawbee,
To boat me o'er to Charlie.

We 'll o'er the water and o'er the sea,
We 'll o'er the water to Charlie;
Come weel, come woe, we 'll gather and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie.

I lo'e weel my Charlie's name,
Though some there be abhor him:
But oh, to see auld Nick gaun hame,
And Charlie's faes before him!

I swear and vow by moon and stars,
And sun that shines so early,
If I had twenty thousand lives,
I'd die as aft for Charlie.

RATTLIN', ROARIN' WILLIE.

TUNE—"Rattlin', roarin' Willie."

"The hero of this chant," says Burns, "was one of the worthiest fellows in the world—William Dunbar, Esq., writer to the signet, Edinburgh, and colonel of the Crochallan corps—a club of wits, who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments." The last stanza only was the work of the poet.

O RATTLIN', roarin' Willie,
Oh, he held to the fair,
And for to sell his fiddle,
And buy some other ware;
But parting wi' his fiddle,
The saut tear blin't his ee;
And rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me!

O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
Oh, sell your fiddle sae fine;
O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
And buy a pint o' wine!
If I should sell my fiddle,
The warl' would think I was mad;
For mony a rantin' day
My fiddle and I hae had.

As I cam by Crochallan,
I cannily keekit ben—
Rattlin', roarin' Willie
Was sitting at yon board en';
Sitting at yon board en',
And amang guid companie;
Rattlin', roarin' Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me!

MY HOGGIE.*

TUNE—"What will I do gin my hoggie die?"

WHAT will I do gin my hoggie die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And vow but I was vogie![1]

The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,
Me and my faithfu' doggie;
We heard nought but the roaring linn,
Amang the braes sae scroggie;[2]

But the houlet cried frae the castle wa'
The blutter[3] frae the boggie,
The tod[4] replied upon the hill,
I trembled for my hoggie.

When day did daw, and cocks did craw,
The morning it was foggie;
An unco tyke[5] lap o'er the dike,
And maist has kill'd my hoggie

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.

The chorus of this song is old; but the two stanzas are Burns's.

CHORUS.

UP in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;

---

[1] Vain. [2] Full of stunted bushes. [3] Mire-snipe.
[4] Fox. [5] A strong dog.

* *Hoggie*—a young sheep after it is smeared, and before it is first shorn.

Sae loud and shrill I hear the blast,
I 'm sure it 's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering[1] in the thorn,
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang 's the night frae e'en to morn,
I 'm sure it 's winter fairly.

I 'M O'ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET.

TUNE—"I 'm o'er young to marry yet."

I AM my mammy's ae bairn,
Wi' unco[2] folk I weary, sir;
And lying in a man's bed,
I 'm fley'd[3] wad mak me eerie,[4] sir.

I 'm o'er young to marry yet;
I 'm o'er young to marry yet;
I 'm o'er young—'twad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammy yet.

My mammy coft[5] me a new gown,
The kirk maun hae the gracing o 't;
Were I to lie wi' you, kind sir,
I 'm fear'd ye 'd spoil the lacing o 't.

Hallowmas is come and gane,
The nights are lang in winter, sir;
And you and I in ae bed,
In trouth I dare nae venture, sir.

Fu' loud and shrill the frosty wind
Blaws through the leafless timmer,[6] sir;
But if ye come this gate[7] again,
I 'll aulder be gin simmer, sir.

THE WINTER IS PAST.

THE winter it is past, and the summer 's come at last,
And the little birds sing on every tree;
Now everything is glad, while I am very sad,
Since my true love is parted from me.

The rose upon the brier, by the waters running clear,
May have charms for the linnet or the bee;
Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts at rest,
But my true love is parted from me.

---

[1] Shivering. [2] Strange. [3] Afraid. [4] Timorous
[5] Bought. [6] Trees. [7] Way.

My love is like the sun, in the firmament does run,
For ever is constant and true;
But his is like the moon, that wanders up and down,
And is every month changing anew.

All you that are in love, and cannot it remove,
I pity the pains you endure:
For experience makes me know that your hearts are full o' woe,
A woe that no mortal can cure.

OH, WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.

TUNE—"Willie brew'd a peck o' maut."

The poet's account of the origin of this song is as follows:—"The air is Allan Masterton's, the song mine. The occasion of it was this—Mr William Nicol of the High School, Edinburgh, being at Moffat during the autumn vacation, honest Allan—who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton—and I went to pay Nicol a visit. We had such a joyous meeting that Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business."

OH, Willie brew'd a peck o' maut
And Rob and Allan cam to pree;[1]
Three blither hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wadna find in Christendie.

We are na fou, we 're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And aye we 'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are we;
And mony a night we 've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!

It is the moon—I ken her horn,
That 's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wile us hame,
But, by my sooth, she 'll wait a wee!

Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
A cuckold, coward loon is he!
Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!

---

[1] Taste.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

TUNE—"Death of Captain Cook."

The story of Mary Campbell has been briefly alluded to in the memoir of the poet, and in the notes to the Correspondence. She belonged to the neighbourhood of Dunoon, a beautiful watering-place on the Clyde, and was in the service of Colonel Montgomery of Coilsfield when the poet made her acquaintance, and afterwards in that of Gavin Hamilton. They would appear to have been seriously attached to each other. When Jane Armour's father had ordered her to relinquish all claims on the poet, his thoughts naturally turned to Mary Campbell. It was arranged that Mary should give up her place with the view of making preparations for their union; but before she went home they met in a sequestered spot on the banks of the Ayr. Standing on either side of a purling brook, and holding a Bible between them, they exchanged vows of eternal fidelity. Mary presented him with her Bible, the poet giving his own in exchange. This Bible has been preserved, and on a blank leaf, in the poet's hand-writing, is inscribed, "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely: I am the Lord." (Lev. xix. 12. On the second volume, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath," (Matt. v. 33.) And on another blank leaf his name and mark as a Royal Arch mason. The lovers never met again. Mary Campbell having died suddenly at Greenock. Over her grave a monument has been erected by the admirers of the poet. On the third anniversary of her death, Jean Armour, then his wife, noticed that, towards the evening, "he grew sad about something, went into the barn-yard, where he strode restlessly up and down for some time, although repeatedly asked to come in. Immediately on entering the house he sat down and wrote 'To Mary in Heaven,'" which Lockhart characterises "as the noblest of all his ballads."

THOU ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lovest to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love!
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace;
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!

Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

THE LADDIES BY THE BANKS O' NITH.

TUNE—"Up and waur them a'."

The following ballad originated in a contest for the representation of the Dumfries burghs, which took place in September 1789, between the former member, Sir James Johnston of Westerhall, who was supported by the court and the Tories, and Captain Miller of Dalswinton, the eldest son of the poet's landlord, who had the interest of the Duke of Queensberry and the Whigs. As Burns had the warmest veneration for individuals of both parties, he wished to avoid taking any active part on either side, and contented himself therefore with penning this piece chiefly against the Duke of Queensberry, the largest landed proprietor in Nithsdale, and for whose character he seems to have entertained the utmost detestation. The allusion in the first verse is to the vote his Grace gave on the regency question, when he deserted the king, his master, in whose household he held office, and supported the right of the Prince of Wales to assume the government without the consent of Parliament.

THE laddies by the banks o' Nith
Wad trust his Grace wi' a', Jamie;
But he 'll sair[1] them as he sair'd the king,
Turn tail and rin awa', Jamie.

Up and waur[2] them a', Jamie,
Up and waur them a';
The Johnstons hae the guidin' o't,
Ye turncoat Whigs, awa'.

The day he stood his country's friend,
Or gaed her faes a claw, Jamie,
Or frae puir man a blessin' wan,
That day the duke ne'er saw, Jamie.

But wha is he, the country's boast,
Like him there is na twa, Jamie;
There 's no a callant[3] tents[4] the kye,[5]
But kens o' Westerha', Jamie.

To end the wark here 's Whistlebirck,*
Lang may his whistle blaw, Jamie;
And Maxwell true o' sterling blue,
And we 'll be Johnstons a', Jamie.

---

[1] Serve. [2] Beat. [3] Boy. [4] Tends. [5] Cows.

* Alexander Birtwhistle, Esq., merchant in Kirkcudbright, and provost of the burgh.

Up and waur them a', Jamie,
Up and waur them a';
The Johnstons hae the guidin' o't,
Ye turncoat Whigs, awa'.

THE FIVE CARLINES.

TUNE—"Chevy chace."

This is another ballad which the poet penned on the contested election mentioned above. It represents the five burghs in cleverly-drawn figurative characters—Dumfries, as Maggy on the banks of Nith; Annan, as Blinking Bess of Annandale; Kirkcudbright, as Whisky Jean of Galloway; Sanquhar, as Black Joan frae Crichton Peel; and Lochmaben, as Marjory of the Many Lochs—each of which is more or less locally appropriate.

THERE were five carlines[1] in the south,
They fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to Lon'on town,
To bring them tidings hame.

Not only bring them tidings hame,
But do their errands there;
And aiblins[2] gowd and honour baith
Might be that laddie's share.

There was Maggy by the banks o' Nith,
A dame wi' pride eneugh;
And Marjory o' the Mony Lochs,
A carline auld and teugh.

And Blinkin Bess of Annandale,
That dwelt near Solway-side,
And Whisky Jean, that took her gill
In Galloway sae wide.

And Black Joan, frae Crichton Peel,
O' gipsy kith and kin;—
Five wighter[3] carlines werena foun'
The south countrie within.

To send a lad to Lon'on town,
They met upon a day;
And mony a knight, and mony a laird,
Their errand fain wad gae.

Oh, mony a knight, and mony a laird,
This errand fain wad gae;
But nae ane could their fancy please,
Oh, ne'er a ane but twae.

---

[1] Old women. [2] Perhaps. [3] More powerful.

The first he was a belted knight,*
Bred o' a Border clan;
And he wad gae to Lon'on town,
Might nae man him withstan';

And he wad do their errands weel,
And meikle he wad say;
And ilka ane at Lon'on court
Wad bid to him guid-day.

Then neist cam in a sodger youth,†
And spak wi' modest grace,
And he wad gae to Lon'on town,
If sae their pleasure was.

He wadna hecht[1] them courtly gifts,
Nor meikle speech pretend;
But he wad hecht an honest heart
Wad ne'er desert his friend.

Now, wham to choose, and wham refuse,
At strife thir carlines fell;
For some had gentlefolks to please,
And some wad please themsel.

Then out spak mim-mou'd[2] Meg o' Nith,
And she spak up wi' pride,
And she wad send the sodger youth.
Whatever might betide.

For the auld guidman‡ o' Lon'on court
She didna care a pin;
But she wad send a sodger youth
To greet his eldest son.§

Then up sprang Bess of Annandale,
And swore a deadly aith,
Says, "I will send the Border knight
Spite o' you carlines baith.

"For far-off fowls hae feathers fair,
And fools o' change are fain;
But I hae tried this Border knight,
And I 'll try him yet again."

Then Whisky Jean spak owre her drink,
"Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The auld guidman o' Lon'on court,
His back 's been at the wa'.

---

[1] Promise.

[2] Prim-mouthed.

* Sir J. Johnston.
† Captain Miller.
‡ George III.
§ The Prince of Wales.

"And mony a friend that kiss'd his cup
Is now a fremit[1] wight;
But it 's ne'er be said o' Whisky Jean,
I'll send the Border knight."

Says Black Joan frae Crichton Peel,
A carline stoor[2] and grim,—
"The auld guidman, and the young guidman,
For me may sink or swim;

"For fools will prate o' right and wrang,
While knaves laugh in their sleeve;
But wha blows best the horn shall win,
I'll spier nae courtier's leave."

Then slow raise Marjory o' the Lochs,
And wrinkled was her brow;
Her ancient weed was russet gray,
Her auld Scots bluid was true.

"The Lon'on court set light by me—
I set as light by them;
And I will send the sodger lad
To shaw that court the same."

Sae how this weighty plea may end,
Nae mortal wight can tell:
God grant the king, and ilka man,
May look weel to himsel!

THE BLUE-EYED LASSIE.

AIR—"The Blue-eyed Lass."

The "Blue-Eyed Lassie" was Miss Jean Jeffrey, daughter of the Rev. Mr Jeffrey of Lochmaben, in Dumfriesshire, at whose house the poet was a frequent visitor. On the occasion of his first visit, the young lady, then a charming blue eyed creature of eighteen, did the honours of the table, and so pleased the poet, that next morning at breakfast he presented her with the following passport to fame, in the form of one of his finest songs. Miss Jeffrey afterwards went out to New York, where she married an American gentleman of the name of Renwick, to whom she bore a numerous family. One of her daughters became the wife of Captain Wilks, of the United States Navy, whose name was recently brought so prominently before the public of this country in connexion with the affair of the steamship *Trent*, and the capture of the Confederate Commissioners.

I GAED a waefu' gate[3] yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I'll dearly rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
Twa lovely een o' bonny blue.

[1] Estranged. [2] Austere. [3] Road

'Twas not her golden ringlets bright;
Her lips, like roses, wat wi' dew;
Her heaving bosom, lily-white—
It was her een sae bonny blue.

She talk'd, she smiled, my heart she wiled;
She charm'd my soul—I wist na how;
And aye the stound,[1] the deadly wound,
Cam frae her een sae bonny blue.
But spare to speak, and spare to speed,*
She'll aiblins[2] listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead[3]
To her twa een sae bonny blue.

WHEN FIRST I SAW FAIR JEANIE'S FACE.

AIR—"Maggie Lauder."

This song first appeared in the *New York Mirror* in 1846, with the following notice of the heroine, Mrs Renwick (*nee* Miss Jean Jeffrey) mentioned above:—"The lady to whom the following verses—never before published—were addressed, known to the readers of Burns as the 'Blue-eyed Lassie,' is one of a race whose beauties and virtues formed for several generations the inspiration of the masters of Scottish song. Her mother was Agnes Armstrong, in whose honour the touching words and beautiful air of 'Roslin Castle' were composed.

WHEN first I saw fair Jeanie's face,
I couldna tell what ail'd me,
My heart went fluttering pit-a-pat,
My een they almost fail'd me.
She's aye sae neat, sae trim, sae tight,
All grace does round her hover,
Ae look deprived me o' my heart,
And I became a lover.

She's aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay,
She's aye so blithe and cheerie;
She's aye sae bonny, blithe, and gay,
Oh, gin I were her dearie!

Had I Dundas's whole estate,
Or Hopetoun's wealth to shine in;
Did warlike laurels crown my brow,
Or humbler bays entwining—
I'd lay them a' at Jeanie's feet,
Could I but hope to move her,
And prouder than a belted knight,
I'd be my Jeanie's lover.
She's aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay, &c.

---

[1] Pang. [2] Perhaps. [3] Death.

* A proverbial expression—Give me the chance of speaking and the opportunity of gaining her favour.

But sair I fear some happier swain
Has gain'd sweet Jeanie's favour:
If so, may every bliss be hers,
Though I maun never have her;
But gang she east, or gang she west,
'Twixt Forth and Tweed all over,
While men have eyes, or ears, or taste,
She 'll always find a lover.
She 's aye, aye sae blithe, sae gay, &c.

MY LOVELY NANCY.

TUNE—"The Quaker's Wife."

"The following song," says the poet, in a letter to Clarinda, to whose charms, probably, we owe the lines, "is one of my latest productions; and I send it to you as I would do anything else, because it pleases myself:"—

THINE am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Every pulse along my veins,
Every roving fancy.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
Though despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away these rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure:
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love 's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

TIBBIE DUNBAR.

TUNE—"Johnny M'Gill."

OH, wilt thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
Oh, wilt thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?
Wilt thou ride on a horse, or be drawn in a car
Or walk by my side, oh, sweet Tibbie Dunbar?

I care na thy daddie, his lands and his money,
I care na thy kin, sae high and sae lordly:
But say thou wilt hae me for better for waur—
And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar!

WHEN ROSY MAY COMES IN WI' FLOWERS.

TUNE—"The gardener wi' his paidle."

The poet afterwards produced a new version of this song, with a change in the burden at the end of the stanzas.

WHEN rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay green-spreading bowers,
Then busy, busy, are his hours—
The gardener wi' his paidle.[1]
The crystal waters gently fa';
The merry birds are lovers a';
The scented breezes round him blaw—
The gardener wi' his paidle.

When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,
Then through the dews he maun repair—
The gardener wi' his paidle.
When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws of nature's rest,
He flies to her arms he lo'es the best—
The gardener wi' his paidle.

MY HARRY WAS A GALLANT GAY.

TUNE—"Highlander's Lament."

The chorus of this song, the poet tells us, he picked up from an old woman in Dunblane, the rest being his own. The old song was composed on a Highland love affair; but this version was evidently intended for a Jacobite melody.

MY Harry was a gallant gay,
Fu' stately strode he on the plain;
But now he's banish'd far away,
I'll never see him back again.

Oh, for him back again!
Oh, for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaspie's land
For Highland Harry back again.

---

[1] Hoe.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
When we were first acquent
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonny brow was brent.
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson, my jo.

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When a' the lave [1] gae to their bed,
I wander dowie [2] up the glen;
I set me down and greet [3] my fill,
And aye I wish him back again.

Oh, were some villains hangit high,
And ilka body had their ain!
Then I might see the joyfu' sight,
My Highland Harry back again.

BEWARE O' BONNY ANN.

TUNE—"Ye gallants bright."

"I composed this song," says the poet, "out of compliment to Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend, Mr Allan Masterton, composer of the air 'Strathallan's Lament.'" Miss Masterton subsequently became Mrs Derbishire, and went to reside in London.

YE gallants bright, I rede [4] ye right,
Beware o' bonny Ann;
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace
Your heart she will trepan. [5]
Her een sae bright, like stars by night
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimply [6] laced her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.

Youth, Grace, and Love, attendant move
And Pleasure leads the van:
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
They wait on bonny Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man;
Ye gallants braw, I rede you a',
Beware o' bonny Ann!

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO.

TUNE—"John Anderson, my Jo."

JOHN Anderson, my jo, [7] John,
When we were first acquent
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonny brow was brent. [8]

---

1 Rest. 2 Sad. 3 Cry. 4 Warn.
5 Ensnare. 6 Tightly. 7 Love—dear. 8 Smooth

But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,[1]
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty[2] day, John,
We 've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we 'll go;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo,

THE BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR.

TUNE—"Cameronian Rant."

This is an improved version which the poet composed for the *Museum* of an older and more diffuse song on the same subject, which was written by a Mr Barclay, a Berean minister of some note in Edinburgh, and uncle to the distinguished anatomist of the same name.

"OH cam ye here the fight to shun,
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
Or were ye at the Sherra-muir,
And did the battle see, man?"
"I saw the battle sair and tough,
And reekin' red ran mony a sheugh;[3]
My heart, for fear, gaed sough[4] for sough,
To hear the thuds,[5] and see the cluds,
O' clans frae woods, in tartan duds,[6]
Wha glaum'd[7] at kingdoms three, man.

"The red-coat lads, wi' black cockades,
To meet them werna slaw, man;
They rush'd and push'd, and bluid outgush'd,
And mony a bouk[8] did fa', man:
The great Argyle led on his files,
I wat they glanced for twenty miles;
They hack'd and hash'd while broadswords clash'd,
And through they dash'd, and hew'd and smash'd,
'Till fey[9] men died awa', man.

"But had ye seen the philabegs,
And skyrin[10] tartan trews, man
When in the teeth they dared our Whigs
And covenant true-blues, man;

---

[1] Head. [2] Happy. [3] Ditch. [4] Sigh.
[5] Knocks. [6] Clothes. [7] Grasped. [8] Human trunk-body
[9] Predestined. [10] Shining.

In lines extended lang and large,
When bayonets o'erpower'd the targe,
And thousands hasten'd to the charge,
Wi' Highland wrath they frae the sheath
Drew blades o' death, till out o' breath,
They fled like frighted doos,[1] man."

"Oh, how deil, Tam, can that be true?
The chase gaed frae the north, man;
I saw mysel they did pursue
The horsemen back to Forth, man;
And at Dunblane, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straught to Stirling wing'd their flight;
But, cursèd lot! the gates were shut;
And mony a huntit, poor red-coat,
For fear amaist did swarf,[2] man!"

"My sister Kate cam up the gate
Wi' crowdie unto me, man;
She swore she saw some rebels run
Frae Perth unto Dundee, man:
Their left-hand general had nae skill,
The Angus lads had nae good will
That day their neibors' bluid to spill;
For fear by foes that they should lose
Their cogs o' brose, they scared at blows,
And hameward fast did flee, man.

"They 've lost some gallant gentlemen
Amang the Highland clans, man;
I fear my Lord Panmure is slain,
Or fallen in Whiggish hands, man:
Now wad ye sing this double fight,
Some fell for wrang, and some for right;
And mony bade the world guid-night;
Then ye may tell how pell and mell,
By red claymores, and muskets' knell,
Wi' dying yell, the Tories fell,
And Whigs to hell did flee, man.

BLOOMING NELLY.

TUNE—"ON A BANK OF FLOWERS."

ON a bank of flowers, in a summer day
For summer lightly drest,
The youthful blooming Nelly lay,
With love and sleep oppress;

---

[1] Pigeons. [2] Swoon.

When Willie, wandering through the wood.
Who for her favour oft had sued,
He gazed, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd
And trembled where he stood.

Her closèd eyes, like weapons sheathed,
Were seal'd in soft repose;
Her lips, still as she fragrant breathed,
It richer dyed the rose.
The springing lilies sweetly prest.
Wild-wanton, kiss'd her rival breast;
He gazed, he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd-
His bosom ill at rest.

Her robes, light waving in the breeze,
Her tender limbs embrace!
Her lovely form, her native ease,
All harmony and grace!
Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,
A faltering, ardent kiss he stole;
He gazed. he wish'd, he fear'd, he blush'd.
And sigh'd his very soul.

As flies the partridge from the brake,
On fear-inspirèd wings,
So Nelly, starting, half-awake,
Away affrighted springs:
But Willie follow'd—as he should;
He overtook her in the wood;
He vow'd, he pray'd, he found the maid
Forgiving all and good.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

TUNE—"Faille na Miosg."

'The first half stanza of this song," says Burns, "is old; the rest is mine.'

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart 's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart 's in the Highlands wherever I go.

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow:
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.

My heart 's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart 's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe—
My heart 's in the Highlands wherever I go.

THE BANKS OF NITH.

TUNE—"Robie donna Gorach."

THE Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith, to me,
Where Cummins * ance had high command:
When shall I see that honour'd land,
That winding stream I love so dear!
Must wayward Fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here?

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom!
How sweetly wind thy sloping dales,
Where lambkins wanton through the broom!
Though wandering, now, must be my doom,
Far from thy bonny banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
Amang the friends of early days!

TAM GLEN.

TUNE—"Tam Glen."

MY heart is a-breaking, dear tittie![1]
Some counsel unto me come len';
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I 'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fallow,
In poortith I might mak a fen;[2]
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

There 's Lowrie the Laird o' Drumeller,
"Guid day to you, brute!" he comes ben;
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

---

[1] Sister. [2] Shift.

* The well-known Comyns of Scottish history.

My minnie[1] does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I 'll forsake him,
He 'll gie me guid hunder marks ten;
But if it 's ordain'd I maun take him,
Oh, wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the valentines' dealing,
My heart to my mou' gied a sten;[2]
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written—Tam Glen.

The last Halloween I lay waukin'[3]
My droukit[4] sark-sleeve, as ye ken;*
His likeness cam up the house staukin',
And the very gray breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come counsel, dear tittie! don't tarry—
I 'll gie ye my bonny black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly—Tam Glen.

THE TAILOR.

TUNE—"The tailor fell through the bed, thimbles and a'."

THE tailor fell through the bed, thimbles and a';
The tailor fell through the bed, thimbles and a';
The blankets were thin, and the sheets they were sma,
The tailor fell through the bed, thimbles and a'.

The sleepy bit lassie, she dreaded nae ill;
The sleepy bit lassie, she dreaded nae ill;
The weather was cauld, and the lassie lay still,
She thought that a tailor could do her nae ill.

Gie me the groat again, canny young man;
Gie me the groat again, canny young man;
The day it is short, and the night it is lang,
The dearest siller that ever I wan!

---

[1] Mother. [2] Round. [3] Watching. [4] Wet.

* For an explanation of this old usage, see, under the head "Poems," Note * page 32.

There 's somebody weary wi' lying her lane;
There 's somebody weary wi' lying her lane;
There 's some that are dowie,[1] I trow wad be fain[2]
To see the bit tailor come skippin' again.

YE HAE LIEN WRANG, LASSIE.

CHORUS.

YE hae lien a' wrang, lassie,
Ye 've lien a' wrang;
Ye 've lien in an unco[3] bed,
And wi' a fremit[4] man.

Your rosy cheeks are turn'd sae wan,
Ye 're greener than the grass, lassie;
Your coatie 's shorter by a span,
Yet ne'er an inch the less, lassie.

O lassie, ye hae play'd the fool,
And ye will feel the scorn, lassie;
For aye the brose ye sup at e'en,
Ye bock[5] them ere the morn, lassie.

Oh, ance ye danced upon the knowes,[6]
And through the wood ye sang, lassie;
But in the herrying o' a bee byke,
I fear ye 've got a stang, lassie.

THERE 'S A YOUTH IN THIS CITY.

TUNE—"Neil Gow's Lament."

The first half stanza of this song is old; the rest by Burns

THERE 's a youth in this city,
It were a great pity
That he frae our lasses should wander awa';
For he 's bonny and braw,
Weel favour'd witha',
And his hair has a natural buckle and a'.
His coat is the hue
Of his bonnet sae blue:
His fecket* is white as the new-driven snaw;
His hose they are blae,
And his shoon like the slae,
And his clear siller buckles they dazzle us a'.

---

[1] Melancholy [2] Glad. [3] Strange
[4] Stranger. [5] Vomit. [6] Hills.

* An under waistcoat with sleeves

For beauty and fortune
The laddie 's been courtin';
Weel-featured, weel-tocher'd, weel-mounted, and braw;
But chiefly the siller,
That gars him gang till her,
The penny 's the jewel that beautifies a'.
There 's Meg wi' the mailen,*
That fain wad a haen him;
And Susie, whose daddy was laird o' the ha';
There 's lang-tocher'd Nancy
Maist fetters his fancy—
But the laddie's dear sel he lo'es dearest of a'.

OUR THRISSLES FLOURISHED FRESH AND FAIR.

TUNE—"Awa', Whigs, awa'."

The second and fourth stanzas only of this song are from the pen of the poet the others belong to an old Jacobite ditty.

OUR thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,
And bonny bloom'd our roses;
But Whigs cam like a frost in June,
And wither'd a' our posies.

Awa', Whigs, awa'!
Awa', Whigs, awa'!
Ye 're but a pack o' traitor louns
Ye 'll do nae guid at a'.

Our ancient crown 's fa'n in the dust—
Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o't;
And write their names in his black beuk
Wha gie the Whigs the power o't!

Our sad decay in Church and State
Surpasses my describing;
The Whigs cam o'er us for a curse,
And we hae done wi' thriving.

Grim Vengeance lang has ta'en a nap,
But we may see him wauken;
Gude help the day when royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin![1]

---

[1] Hare.

* A well-stocked farm.

COME REDE ME, DAME.

Come rede[1] me, dame, come tell me, dame
And nane can tell mair truly,
What colour maun the man be of
To love a woman duly.

The carline[2] flew baith up and down,
And leugh and answer'd ready,
I learn'd a sang in Annandale,
A dark man for my lady.

But for a country quean like thee,
Young lass, I tell thee fairly,
That wi' the white I've made a shift,
And brown will do fu' rarely.

There 's mickle love in raven locks,
The flaxen ne'er grows youden,[3]
There 's kiss and hause[4] me in the brown,
And glory in the gowden.

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY.

Tune—"Oh, mount and go."

CHORUS.

Oh, mount and go,
Mount and make you ready;
Oh, mount and go,
And be the captain's lady.

When the drums do beat,
And the cannons rattle,
Thou shalt sit in state,
And see thy love in battle.

When the vanquish'd foe
Sues for peace and quiet,
To the shades we 'll go,
And in love enjoy it.

OH, MERRY HAE I BEEN TEETHIN' A HECKLE.

Tune—"Lord Breadalbane's March."

Oh, merry hae I been teethin' a heckle,
And merry hae I been shapin' a spoon;

[1] Counsel. [2] Old woman. [3] Gray. [4] Hug or embrace.

And merry hae I been cloutin'[1] a kettle,
And kissin' my Katie when a' was done.
Oh, a' the laug day I ca' at my hammer,
And a' the lang day I whistle and sing,
A' the lang night I cuddle[2] my kimmer,[3]
And a' the lang night am as happy 's a king.

Bitter in dool I lickit my winnin's,
O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave:
Blest be the hour she cool'd in her linens,
And blithe be the bird that sings on her grave!
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
And come to my arms and kiss me again!
Drunken or sober, here 's to thee, Katie!
And blest be the day I did it again.

EPPIE ADAIR

TUNE—"My Eppie."

AND oh! my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wha wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?
By love, and by beauty,
By law, and by duty,
I swear to be true to
My Eppie Adair!

And oh! my Eppie,
My jewel, my Eppie!
Wha wadna be happy
Wi' Eppie Adair?
A' pleasure exile me,
Dishonour defile me,
If e'er I beguile thee,
My Eppie Adair!

YOUNG JOCKEY.

TUNE—"Young Jockey."

"The whole of this song," says Stenhouse, "except ng three or four lines, is the production of Burns."

YOUNG Jockey was the blithest lad
In a' our town or here awa':
Fu' blithe he whistled at the gaud,[4]
Fu' lightly danced he in the ha'.

[1] Patching up. [2] Fondle. [3] Dearie [4] Plough.

He roosed[1] my een, sae bonny blue,
He roosed my waist sae genty sma',
And aye my heart came to my mou'
When ne'er a body heard or saw.

My Jockey toils upon the plain,
Through wind and weet, through frost and snaw
And o'er the lea I leuk fu' fain
When Jockey's owsen hameward ca'.
And aye the night comes round again,
When in his arms he taks me a';
And aye he vows he'll be my ain,
As lang's he has a breath to draw.

WEE WILLIE GRAY.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet;
Peel a willow-wand to be him boots and jacket:
The rose upon the brier will be him trouse and doublet.
The rose upon the brier will be him trouse and doublet.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet,
Twice a lily flower will be him sark and cravat:
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet,
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet.

JAMIE, COME TRY ME.

Tune—"Jamie, come try me."

CHORUS.

Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me,
If thou wad win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

If thou should ask my love,
Could I deny thee?
If thou would win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

If thou should kiss me, love,
Wha could espy thee?
If thou wad be my love,
Jamie, come try me.

---

[1] Praised.

THE BATTLE OF KILLIECRANKIE.

TUNE—"Killiecrankie."

Verses of this song, which celebrates the battle where Viscount Dundee fell in the moment of victory, is old; the rest is from the pen of Burns.

WHARE hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Whare hae ye been sae brankie,[1] O?
Oh, whare hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Cam ye by Killiecrankie, O?
An ye had been whare I hae been,
Ye wadna been sae cantie,[2] O;
An ye had seen what I hae seen,
On the braes of Killiecrankie, O.

I fought at land, I fought at sea;
At hame I fought my auntie, O;
But I met the devil and Dundee,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.
The bauld Pitcur fell in a fur,[3]
And Clavers got a clankie, O;
Or I had fed an Athole gled,[4]
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

GUIDWIFE, COUNT THE LAWIN.

TUNE—"Guidwife count the lawin."

GANE is the day, and mirk 's the night,
But we 'll ne'er stray for fau't[5] o' light,
For ale and brandy 's stars and moon,
And blude-red wine 's the rising sun.

Then, guidwife, count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin;
Then, guidwife, count the lawin,
And bring a coggie[6] mair.

There 's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
And simple folk maun fecht and fen';
But here we 're a' in ae accord,
For ilka man that 's drunk 's a lord.

My coggie is a haly pool,
That heals the wounds o' care and dool;[7]
And pleasure is a wanton trout,
An ye drink but deep ye 'll find him out.

---

[1] Gaudy. [2] Merry. [3] Furrow. [4] Kite.
[5] Want. [6] Bumper. [7] Grief.

WHISTLE O'ER THE LAVE O'T

TUNE—"Whistle o'er the lave o't."

FIRST when Maggy was my care,
Heaven, I thought, was in her air;
Now we're married—spier[1] nae mair—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.—
Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
Bonny Meg was nature's child;
Wiser men than me's beguiled—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

How we live, my Meg and me,
How we love, and how we 'gree,
I care na by how few may see—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.
Wha I wish were maggots' meat,
Dish'd up in her winding sheet,
I could write—but Meg maun see't—
Whistle o'er the lave o't.

OH, CAN YE LABOUR LEA.

OH, can ye labour lea, young man,
And can ye labour lea;
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
Ye'se never scorn me.

I fee'd a man at Martinmas,
Wi' airl-pennies three;
And a' the faut I fan' wi' him,
He couldna labour lea.

The stibble-rig is easy plough'd,
The fallow land is free;
But wha wad keep the handless coof,
That couldna labour lea?

WOMEN'S MINDS.

TUNE—"For a' that."

THOUGH women's minds, like winter winds,
May shift and turn, and a' that,
The noblest breast adores them maist,
A consequence I draw that.

---

[1] Ask.

For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as muckle 's a' that,
The bonny lass that I lo'e best
She 'll be my ain for a' that.

Great love I bear to all the fair,
Their humble slave, and a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still,
A mortal sin to thraw that.

But there is ane aboon the lave,[1]
Has wit, and sense, and a' that;
A bonny lass, I like her best,
And wha a crime dare ca' that?

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONNY FACE.

TUNE—"The Maid's Complaint."

'These verses," says Cunningham, "were originally in English: Burns bestowed a Scottish dress upon them, and made them utter sentiments connected with his own affections."

It is na, Jean, thy bonny face,
Nor shape, that I admire,
Although thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awake desire.
Something, in ilka part o' thee,
To praise, to love, I find;
But, dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

Nae mair ungenerous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.
Content am I, if Heaven shall give
But happiness to thee:
And, as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

MY LOVE SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET.

TUNE—"Lady Badinscoth's Reel."

My love she 's but a lassie yet,
My love she 's but a lassie yet;
We 'll let her stand a year or twa,
She 'll no be half sae saucy yet.

[1] Rest.

I rue the day I sought her, O,
I rue the day I sought her, O;
Wha gets her needna say she 's woo'd,
But he may say he 's bought her, O!

Come, draw a drap o' the best o 't yet;
Come draw a drap o' the best o 't yet;
Gae seek for pleasure where ye will,
But here I never miss'd it yet.
We 're a' dry wi' drinking o 't;
We 're a' dry wi' drinking o 't;
The minister kiss'd the fiddler's wife,
And couldna preach for thinkin' o 't.

CA' THE EWES.

TUNE—"Ca' the Ewes to the Knowes."

The fourth and fifth stanzas of this song, which was written for the *Museum*, are old, with a few touches of improvement by Burns. He afterwards wrote a much better version for Thomson's collection, which will be found at p. 450

As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He row'd[1] me sweetly in his plaid,
And he ca'd me his dearie.

Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonny dearie!

Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide?
Beneath the hazels spreading wide
The moon it shines fu' clearly.

I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool,
And a' the day to sit in dool,[2]
And naebody to see me.

Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye 'se lie and sleep,
And ye sall be my dearie.

If ye 'll but stand to what ye 've said,
I 'se gang wi' you, my shepherd lad,
And ye may rowe me in your plaid,
And I sall be your dearie.

---

[1] Wrapt. [2] Grief.

While waters wimple [1] to the sea;
While day blinks in the lift [2] sae hie;
Till clay-cauld death sall blin' my ee,
Ye sall be my dearie.

SIMMER'S A PLEASANT TIME.

TUNE—"Aye Waukin, O."

This is an old song, on which the poet appears to have made only a few alterations

SIMMER 's a pleasant time,
Flowers of every colour;
The water rins o'er the heugh,[3]
And I long for my true lover.

Aye waukin, O,
Waukin still and wearie:
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I 'm eerie; [4]
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

Lanely night comes on,
A' the lave [5] are sleepin';
I think on my bonny lad,
And I bleer my een with greetin'.[6]

THERE'LL NEVER BE PEACE TILL JAMIE COMES HAME.

TUNE—"There are few guid fellows when Willie's awa'."

When political combustion," says the poet, in a letter to Thomson, enclosing this song, which had evidently been composed while in a Jacobitical mood, "ceases to be the object of princes and patriots, it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets."

BY yon castle wa', at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, though his head it was gray;
And as he was singing, the tears fast down came,
There 'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
The Church is in ruins, the State is in jars;
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars;
We darena weel say 't, though we ken wha 's to blame—
There 'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame!

---

[1] Wander [2] Heavens. [3] Steep.
[4] Timorous. [5] Rest. [6] Weeping.

My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
And now I greet[1] round their green beds in the yerd.[2]
It brak the sweet heart of my faithfu' auld dame—
There 'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
Now life is a burthen that bows me down,
Since I tint[3] my bairns, and he tint his crown;
But till my last moments my words are the same—
There 'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

LOVELY DAVIES.

TUNE—"Miss Muir."

The heroine of this song was Miss Deborah Davies, a beautiful young English woman, connected by ties of blood with the family of Captain Riddel of Glenriddel, at whose house the poet first met her. Her beauty and accomplishments appear to have made a deep impression upon him, for he has celebrated them in a number of effusions in both prose and verse. In a letter to her enclosing this song, he says, in a strain of enthusiastic gallantry:—"When my theme is youth and beauty—a young lady whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment, are equally striking and unaffected—by Heavens! though I had lived threescore years a married man, and threescore years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea; and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject."

OH, how shall I, unskilfu' try
The poet's occupation,
The tunefu' powers, in happy hours,
That whisper inspiration?
Even they maun dare an effort mair
Than aught they ever gave us,
Or they rehearse, in equal verse,
The charms o' lovely Davies.

Each eye it cheers, when she appears,
Like Phœbus in the morning,
When past the shower, and every flower
The garden is adorning.
As the wretch looks o'er Siberia's shore,
When winter-bound the wave is;
Sae droops our heart when we maun part
Frae charming, lovely Davies.

Her smile 's a gift, frae 'boon the lift,
That maks us mair than princes;
A sceptred hand, a king's command,
Is in her darting glances:
The man in arms, 'gainst female charms
Even he her willing slave is;
He hugs his chain, and owns the reign
Of conquering, lovely Davies.

[1] Weep [2] Earth [3] Lost

My Muse to dream of such a theme,
Her feeble powers surrender;
The eagle's gaze alone surveys
The sun's meridian splendour:
I wad in vain essay the strain,
The deed too daring brave is;
I 'll drap the lyre, and mute admire
The charms o' lovely Davies.

THE BONNY WEE THING.

TUNE—"Bonny wee Thing."

This is another, though briefer and more sentimental, song in celebration of the lady mentioned above—"the charming, lovely Davies."

BONNY wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.[1]
Wishfully I look and languish
In that bonny face o' thine;
And my heart it stounds[2] wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,
In ae constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonny wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine!

WAR SONG.

AIR—"Oran an Doig;" or, "The Song of Death."

"I have just finished," says the poet, in a letter to Mrs Dunlop, enclosing this noble lyric, "the following song, which, to a lady, the descendant of Wallace, and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology." The subject, the poet tells us, was suggested to him by an Isle-of-Skye tune entitled, "Oran an Doig;" or, "The Song of Death," which he found in a collection of Highland airs, and to the measure of which he adapted his stanzas.

Scene—A field of battle—Time of the day, Evening—The wounded and dying of the victorious army are supposed to join in the following song:—

---

[1] Lose.

[2] Aches.

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the broad setting sun!
Farewell loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties!
Our race of existence is run!

Thou grim King of Terrors, thou life's gloomy foe!
Go, frighten the coward and slave!
Go teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but know,
No terrors hast thou to the brave!

Thou strik'st the dull peasant,—he sinks in the dark,
Nor saves e'en the wreck of a name;—
Thou strik'st the young hero—a glorious mark!
He falls in the blaze of his fame!

In the field of proud honour—our swords in our hands,
Our king and our country to save—
While victory shines on life's last ebbing sands—
Oh! who would not die with the brave!

AE FOND KISS.

TUNE—"Rory Dall's Port."

This exquisitely beautiful song sprang from the depth of the poet's passion for Clarinda; and is one of the most vehement and impressive outbursts of intense feeling ever written. Byron and Scott have both stamped it with their approbation; and Mrs Jameson, speaking of these lines, truthfully and elegantly says—"They are in themselves a complete romance; and contain the essence of an existence of pain and pleasure distilled into one burning drop."

AE fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, and then, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare-thee-weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare-thee-weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, Enjoyment, Love, and Pleasure!

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas! for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

GLOOMY DECEMBER.

TUNE—"Wandering Willie."

The last interview of the poet with Clarinda took place in Edinburgh on the 6th of December 1791, and appears to have been deeply affecting on both sides. In remembrance of this meeting, and while still under the influence of the feelings evoked by it, the poet composed these beautiful lines:—

ANCE mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
Ance mair I hail thee, wi' sorrow and care;
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh! ne'er to meet mair.

Fond lovers' parting is sweet painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, oh, farewell for ever!
Is anguish unmingled, and agony pure.

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown;
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Since my last hope and last comfort is gone!

Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, oh! ne'er to meet mair.

BEHOLD THE HOUR.

TUNE—"Oran Gaoil."

A month after the interview mentioned in the introduction to the preceding song—on the 25th of January 1792—Clarinda, in anticipation of her immediate departure for Jamaica to join her husband, wrote to the poet bidding him farewell. "Seek God's favour," she says; "keep His commandments—be solicitous to prepare for a happy eternity. There, I trust, we will meet in never-ending bliss!" She sailed a month afterwards; and the poet poured his feelings on the occasion into the following fine song:—

BEHOLD the hour, the boat arrive,
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart!
Sever'd from thee can I survive?
But Fate has will'd, and we must part.

I'll often greet this surging swell,
Yon distant isle will often hail:
"E'en here I took the last farewell;
There latest mark'd her vanish'd sail!"*

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye.

Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While through thy sweets she loves to stray,
Oh, tell me, does she muse on me?

THE MIRK NIGHT O' DECEMBER.

TUNE—"O May, thy morn."

The following song, the production of a lighter mood, is also said to have been written in commemoration of the final meeting with Clarinda:—

O MAY, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet
As the mirk night o' December;
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I darena name,
But I will aye remember.
And dear was she I darena name,
But I will aye remember.

And here's to them that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum;
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's guid watch o'er them!

---

* The above two stanzas of this song are given by Chambers as follow:—

Behold the hour, the boat arrive!
My dearest Nancy, oh, fareweel!
Sever'd frae thee, can I survive,
Frae thee whom I hae loved sae weel?

Endless and deep shall be my grief;
Nae ray o' comfort shall I see;
But this most precious, dear belief!
That thou wilt still remember me.

And here 's to them we darena tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.
And here 's to them we darena tell,
The dearest o' the quorum!

MY NANNIE'S AWA'.

TUNE—"There 'll never be peace," &c.

Some months after the departure of Clarinda, when time had mellowed the poet's passion, and absence calmed the tumult of his feelings, he wrote the following touching pastoral:—

Now in her green mantle blithe nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;[1]
But to me it 's delightless—my Nannie 's awa'!

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet[2] o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nannie 's awa'!

Thou laverock that springs frae the dews of the lawn,
The shepherd to warn o' the gray breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hails the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nannie 's awa'!

Come, Autumn sae pensive, in yellow and gray,
And soothe me with tidings o' Nature's decay:
The dark dreary winter, and wild driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nannie 's awa'!

WANDERING WILLIE.

In composing this song, Burns is thought to have thrown himself sympathetically into the circumstances of his mistress—Clarinda—and to have given expression to the feelings with which he supposed her to be animated in seeking, after a separation of many years, a reunion with her wayward, wandering husband. The idea of this song appears to have been taken from an old one, of which the two following verses have been preserved:—

"Here awa', there awa', here awa', Willie,
Here awa', there awa', here awa' hame;
Long have I sought thee, dear have I bought thee,
Now I hae gotten my Willie again.

"Through the lang muir I have follow'd my Willie,
Through the lang muir I have follow'd him hame
Whatever betide us, nought shall divide us,
Love now rewards all my sorrow and pain."

---

[1] Wood. [2] Dew

HERE awa', there awa', wandering Willie,
Here awa', there awa', haud awa' hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my ee;
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie—
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes! row gently, ye billows!
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms!

But oh, if he 's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us thou wide roaring main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie 's my ain.

THE DEIL'S AWA' WI' THE EXCISEMAN.

TUNE—"The deil cam fiddling through the town."

Lockhart gives the following interesting account of this song:—"This spirited song was composed on the shores of the Solway, while the poet and a party of his brother excisemen were engaged in watching the motions of a suspicious-looking brig, which had put in there, and which, it was supposed, was engaged in smuggling. The day following that on which she was first seen, the vessel got into shallow water, and it was then discovered that the crew were numerous, and not likely to yield without a struggle. Lewars accordingly was despatched to Dumfries for a party of dragoons, and another officer proceeded on a similar errand to Ecclefechan, leaving Burns with some men under his orders, to watch the brig and prevent landing or escape. Burns manifested considerable impatience while thus occupied, being left for many hours in a wet salt-marsh with a force which he knew to be inadequate for the purpose it was meant to fulfil. One of his comrades hearing him abuse his friend Lewars in particular, for being slow about his journey, the man answered that he also wished the devil had him for his pains, and that Burns in the meantime would do well to indite a song upon the shuggard. Burns said nothing; but after taking a few strides by himself among the reeds and shingle, rejoined his party, and chanted to them this well-known ditty:"—

THE deil cam fiddling through the town,
And danced awa' wi' the Exciseman,
And ilka wife cries—"Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the prize, man!"

The deil 's awa', the deil 's awa',
The deil 's awa' wi' the Exciseman;
He 's danced awa', he 's danced awa',
He 's danced awa' wi' the Exciseman!

We 'll mak our maut, we 'll brew our drink,
We 'll dance, and sing, and rejoice, man;
And mony braw thanks to the meikle black deil
That danced awa' wi' the Exciseman.

The deil 's awa', the deil 's awa,
The deil 's awa' wi' the Exciseman;
He 's danced awa', he 's danced awa',
He 's danced awa' wi' the Exciseman!

There 's threesome reels, there 's foursome reels,
There 's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the land,
Was—the deil 's awa' wi' the Exciseman.

The deil 's awa', the deil 's awa',
The deil 's awa' wi' the Exciseman;
He 's danced awa', he 's danced awa',
He 's danced awa' wi' the Exciseman!

BONNY LESLEY.

The poet, in a letter to Mrs Dunlop, gives the following account of the origin of this song:—"Apropos!—do you know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours? Know, then," said he, "that the heart-struck awe, the distant humble approach, the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that should make their hearts swim in joy, and their imaginations soar in transport, such, so delighting and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss Lesley Baillie, your neighbour at Mayfield. Mr Baillie, with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr H. of G., passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me, on which I took my horse, (though God knows I could ill spare the time,) and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them; and riding home, I composed the following ballad. You must know that there is an old one beginning with—

My bonny Lizzie Baillie,
I'll rowe thee in my plaidie,' &c.

So I parodied it as follows." Miss Baillie ultimately became Mrs Cumming of Logie, and died in Edinburgh in 1843.

Oh, saw ye bonny Lesley
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She 's gane like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The deil he couldna skaith[1] thee,
Nor aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonny face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

The powers aboon will tent[2] thee;
Misfortune sha' na steer thee:
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonny.

CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.

The poet composed the following song to aid the eloquence of a Mr Gillespie, a friend of his, who was paying his addresses to a Miss Lorimer, a young lady who resided at a beautiful place on the banks of the Moffat, called Craigie-burn Wood. The gentleman did not succeed in his suit, however, as the lady afterwards married another; but her marriage proving unfortunate, the poet, regarding her with that pity which is akin to love, made her the subject of some of his finest lyrics. For an account of this lady, see p. 451. Burns afterwards considerably altered this song, and reduced it to the dimensions of the second version.

SWEET closes the evening on Craigie-burn Wood,
And blithely awaukens the morrow;
But the pride of the spring in the Craigie-burn Wood
Can yield to me nothing but sorrow.

Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And oh! to be lying beyond thee;
Oh, sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep
That's laid in the bed beyond thee!

I see the spreading leaves and flowers.
I hear the wild birds singing;
But pleasure they hae nane for me,
While care my heart is wringing.

I canna tell, I maunna tell,
I darena for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

---

[1] Harm. [2] Guard.

I see thee gracefu', straight, and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonny;
But oh, what will my torments be,
If thou refuse thy Johnnie!

To see thee in anither's arms,
In love to lie and languish,
'Twad be my dead,[1] that will be seen,
My heart wad burst wi' anguish.

But, Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
Say thou lo'es nane before me;
And a' my days o' life to come
I'll gratefully adore thee.

SECOND VERSION.

Sweet fa's the eve on Craigie-burn,
And blithe awakes the morrow;
But a' the pride o' spring's return
Can yield me nought but sorrow.

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But what a weary wight can please,
And care his bosom wringing?

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet darena for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

If thou refuse to pity me,
If thou shalt love anither,
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
Around my grave they'll wither.

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE.

AIR—"Carron Side."

In his notes to the *Museum*, the poet says of this song:—"I added the last four lines by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem—such as it is." The entire song, however, was in his own handwriting, and is generally thought to be his own composition, as the other twelve lines have not been found in any collection.

FRAE the friends and land I love,
Driven by Fortune's felly[2] spite,
Frae my best-beloved I rove,
Never mair to taste delight;

---

[1] Death. [2] Relentless.

Never mair maun hope to find
Ease frae toil, relief frae care:
When remembrance wracks the mind,
Pleasures but unveil despair.

Brightest climes shall mirk appear,
Desert ilka blooming shore,
Till the Fates, nae mair severe,
Friendship, Love, and Peace restore;
Till Revenge, wi' laurell'd head,
Bring our banish'd hame again;
And ilka loyal bonny lad
Cross the seas and win his ain.

MY TOCHER'S THE JEWEL.

TUNE—"My Tocher's the Jewel."

OH meikle thinks my luve o' my beauty,
And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin;
But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie[1]
My tocher's[2] the jewel has charms for him.
It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree;
It's a' for the hiney he'll cherish the bee;
My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller
He canna hae luve to spare for me.

Your proffer o' luve's an airl-penny,[3]
My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
But an ye be crafty I am cunnin',
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune maun try.
Ye're like to the timmer[4] o' yon rotten wood,
Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
And ye'll crack[5] your credit wi' mae[6] nor me.

WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE DO?

TUNE—"What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?"

WHAT can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?
Bad luck on the penny that tempted my minnie[7]
To sell her poor Jenny for siller and lan'!
Bad luck on the penny, &c.

---

[1] Know well. [2] Dowry. [3] Money given as earnest of a bargain.
[4] Timber. [5] Injure. [6] More. [7] Mother.

He 's always compleenin' frae mornin' to e'enin',
He hoasts[1] and he hirples[2] the weary day lang;
He 's doyl't[3] and he 's dozen,[4] his bluid it is frozen,
Oh, dreary 's the night wi' a crazy auld man!
He 's doyl't and he 's dozen, &c.

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers,
I never can please him, do a' that I can;
He 's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows:
Oh, dool[5] on the day I met wi' an auld man!
He 's peevish and jealous, &c.

My auld Auntie Katie upon me taks pity,
I 'll do my endeavour to follow her plan!
I 'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heartbreak him,
And then his auld brass will buy me a new pan.
I 'll cross him, and wrack him, &c.

OH, HOW CAN I BE BLITHE AND GLAD?

Tune—"Owre the hills and far awa'."

The poet having found the germ of this song in Herd's collection is thought to have wrought into it some allusion to an incident in his own personal history. "This little lamentation of a desolate damsel," says Jeffrey, "is tender and pretty."

Oh, now can I be blithe and glad,
Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
When the bonny lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa'?
When the bonny lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa'?

It 's no the frosty winter wind,
It 's no the driving drift and snaw;
But aye the tear comes in my ee,
To think on him that 's far awa'.
But aye the tear comes in my ee,
To think on him that 's far awa'.

My father pat me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a',
But I hae ane will tak my part,
The bonny lad that 's far awa'.
But I hae ane will tak my part,
The bonny lad that 's far awa'.

A pair o' gloves he bought for me,
And silken snoods * he gae me twa;

---

[1] Coughs. [2] Limps. [3] Crazed,
[4] Benumbed. [5] Woe.

* See p. 352—*note.*

And I will wear them for his sake,—
The bonny lad that 's far awa'.
And I will wear them for his sake,—
The bonny lad that 's far awa'.

Oh, weary winter soon will pass,
And spring will cleed the birken-shaw ;[1]
And my young baby will be born,
And he 'll be hame that 's far awa'.
And my young baby will be born,
And he 'll be hame that 's far awa'.

I DO CONFESS THOU ART SAE FAIR.

TUNE—"I do confess thou art sae fair."

This song was altered by the poet into Scotch, from a poem by Sir Robert Ayton, private secretary to Anne, consort of James VI. "I think," says Burns, "that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments by giving them a Scots dress." *

I DO confess thou art sae fair,
I wud been owre the lugs[2] in luve,
Had I na found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak thy heart could move.
I do confess thee sweet, but find
Thou art sae thriftless o' thy sweets,
Thy favours are the silly wind,
That kisses ilka thing it meets,

See yonder rosebud, rich in dew,
Amang its native briers sae coy ;
How sune it tines[3] its scent and hue
When pu'd and worn a common toy !
Sic fate, ere lang, shall thee betide,
Though thou may gaily bloom a while ;
Yet sune thou shalt be thrown aside
Like ony common weed and vile.

---

[1] Birch-wood. [2] Ears. [3] Loses.

* The following are the old words :—

"I do confess thou'rt smooth and fair,
And I might have gone near to love thee ;
Had I not found the slightest prayer
That lips could speak had power to move thee
But I can let thee now alone,
As worthy to be loved by none.

"I do confess thou'rt sweet ; yet find
Thee such an unthrift of thy sweets,
Thy favours are but like the wind,
That kisseth everything it meets ;
And since thou canst with more than one,
Thou'rt worthy to be kiss'd by none

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.

TUNE—"Yon wild mossy mountains."

"This song," says the poet, "alludes to a part of my private history which it is of no consequence to the world to know."

YON wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coveys through the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tends his flock as he pipes on his reed.
Where the grouse lead their coveys through the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tends his flock as he pipes on his reed.

Not Gowrie's rich valleys, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o' yon wild mossy moors;
For there, by a lanely, sequester'd clear stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.
For there, by a lanely, sequester'd clear stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.

Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green narrow strath:
For there, wi' my lassie, the day-lang I rove,
While o'er us, unheeded, flee the swift hours o' love.
For there, wi' my lassie, the day-lang I rove,
While o'er us, unheeded, flee the swift hours o' love.

She is not the fairest, although she is fair;
O' nice education but sma' is her share;
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.
Her parentage humble as humble can be,
But I lo'e the dear lassie, because she lo'es me.

To beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs?
And when wit and refinement hae polish'd her darts,
They dazzle our een as they flee to our hearts.
And when wit and refinement hae polish'd her darts,
They dazzle our een as they flee to our hearts.

"The morning rose, that untouch'd stands,
Arm'd with her briers, how sweetly smells!
But, pluck'd and strain'd through ruder hands,
Her sweet no longer with her dwells,
But scent and beauty both are gone,
And leaves fall from her, one by one.

"Such fate, ere long, will thee betide,
When thou hast handled been a while
Like sun-flowers to be thrown aside,
And I shall sigh while some will smile,
To see thy love for more than one
Hath brought thee to be loved by none."

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond sparkling ee.
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me;
And the heart-beating love, as I 'm clasp'd in her arms,
Oh, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!
And the heart-beating love, as I 'm clasp'd in her arms.
Oh, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!

OH FOR ANE-AND-TWENTY, TAM!

TUNE—"The Moudiewort."

AND oh for ane-and-twenty, Tam!
And hey, sweet ane-and-twenty, Tam!
I 'll learn my kin a rattlin' sang,
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.

They snool[1] me sair, and haud me down,
And gar me look like bluntie,[2] Tam;
But three short years will soon wheel roun'—
And then comes ane-and-twenty, Tam.

A gleib o' lan',[3] a claut o' gear,[4]
Was left me by my auntie, Tam;
At kith or kin I needna spier,[5]
An I saw ane-and-twenty, Tam.

They 'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,[6]
Though I mysel hae plenty, Tam;
But hear'st thou, laddie—there 's my loof[7]—
I 'm thine at ane-and-twenty, Tam.

BESS AND HER SPINNING-WHEEL.

TUNE—"The sweet lass that lo'es me."

OH, leeze me on my spinning-wheel,
And leeze me on my rock and reel;
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,[8]
And haps[9] me fiel[10] and warm at e'en!
I 'll set me down and sing and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun,
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal—
Oh, leeze me on my spinning-wheel!

On ilka hand the burnies trot,[11]
And meet below my theekit cot;

---

1 Curo.
2 A simpleton.
3 A portion of ground.
4 A sum of money.
5 Ask.
6 Fool.
7 Hand
8 Comfortably.
9 Wraps.
10 Soft.
11 Run.

The scented birk and hawthorn white,
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdies' nest,
And little fishes' caller[1] rest:
The sun blinks kindly in the biel,[2]
Where blithe I turn my spinning-wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats[3] wail,
And echo cons the doolfu'[4] tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays:
The craik[5] amang the clover hay,
The paitrick whirrin' o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin' round my shiel,[6]
Amuse me at my spinning-wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,
Oh, wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their flaring, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessy at her spinning-wheel?

NITHSDALE'S WELCOME HAME.

This song was written to celebrate the return to Scotland of Lady Winifred Maxwell, a descendant of the attainted Earl of Nithsdale. The music to which the poet composed the verses was by Captain Riddel of Glenriddel.

THE noble Maxwells and their powers
Are coming o'er the Border,
And they 'll gae big Terregle's towers,
And set them a' in order.
And they declare Terregles fair,
For their abode they choose it;
There 's no a heart in a' the land
But 's lighter at the news o't.

Though stars in skies may disappear,
And angry tempests gather:
The happy hour may soon be near
That brings us pleasant weather:
The weary night o' care and grief
May hae a joyfu' morrow;
So dawning day has brought relief—
Fareweel our night o' sorrow!

---

[1] Cool. [2] Cottage, sheltered place. [3] Wood-pigeon.
[4] Woeful. [5] Landrail. [6] Cottage

COUNTRIE LASSIE.

TUNE—"The Country Lass."

In simmer, when the hay was mawn,
And corn waved green in ilka field,
While clover blooms white o'er the lea,
And roses blaw in ilka bield;[1]
Blithe Bessie in the milking shiel[2]
Says, "I'll be wed, come o't what will:"
Out spak a dame in wrinkled eild[3]—
"O' guid advisement comes nae ill.

"It's ye hae wooers mony ane,
And, lassie, ye're but young, ye ken;
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale,[4]
A routhie butt, a routhie ben:[5]
There's Johnnie o' the Buskie Glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;
Tak this frae me, my bonny hen,
It's plenty beats the luver's fire."

"For Johnnie o' the Buskie Glen,
I dinna care a single flie;
He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye,
He has nae luve to spare for me:
But blithe's the blink o' Robbie's ee,
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear:
Ae blink o' him I wadna gie
For Buskie Glen and a' his gear."

"Oh, thoughtless lassie, life's a faught;[6]
The canniest gate,[7] the strife is sair
But ay fu'-hant is fechtin' best,
A hungry care's an unco care:
But some will spend, and some will spare,
And wilfu' folk maun hae their will;
Syne[8] as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill."

"Oh, gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye;
But the tender heart o' leesome[9] luve
The gowd and siller canna buy;
We may be poor—Robbie and I,
Light is the burden luve lays on;
Content and luve bring peace and joy—
What mair hae queens upon a throne?"

---

1 Sheltered place. 2 Shed. 3 Age. 4 Wisely choose
5 A home with plenty in it. 6 Struggle. 7 Easiest way.
8 And. 9 Gladsome.

FAIR ELIZA.

This song is said to have been composed by the poet as an expression of the love which a Mr Hunter, a friend of his, entertained for a certain lady. The gentleman, however, appears to have failed in his suit, for he went out to the West Indies, and died there a short time after his arrival.

TURN again, thou fair Eliza,
Ae kind blink before we part,
Rue on thy despairing lover!
Canst thou break his faithfu' heart?
Turn again, thou fair Eliza;
If to love thy heart denies,
For pity hide the cruel sentence
Under friendship's kind disguise!

Thee, dear maid, hae I offended?
The offence is loving thee:
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever
Wha for thine wad gladly die?
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt mix in ilka throe;
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow.

Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sunny noon;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon;
Not the poet, in the moment
Fancy lightens in his ee,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture,
That thy presence gies to me.

OH, LUVE WILL VENTURE IN.

TUNE—"The Posie.'

OH, luve will venture in
Where it daurna weel be seen:
Oh, luve will venture in
Where wisdom ance has been;
But I will down yon river rove,
Amang the wood sae green—
And a' to pu' a posie
To my ain dear May.

The primrose I will pu',
The firstling of the year;

And I will pu' the pink,
The emblem o' my dear;
For she's the pink o' womankind,
And blooms without a peer—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose,
When Phœbus peeps in view,
For it's like a bauny kiss
O' her sweet, bonny mou';
The hyacinth's for constancy,
Wi' its unchanging blue—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

The lily it is pure,
And the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom
I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity,
And unaffected air—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

The hawthorn I will pu',
Wi' its locks o' siller gray,
Where, like an aged man,
It stands at break of day.
But the songster's nest within the bush
I winna tak away—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

The woodbine I will pu',
When the evening star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew
Shall be her een sae clear;
The violet's for modesty,
Which weel she fa's to wear—
And a' to be a posie
To my ain dear May.

I'll tie the posie round
Wi' the silken band of love,
And I'll place it in her breast,
And I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life
The band shall ne'er remove—
And this will be a posie
To my ain dear May.

THE BANKS O' DOON.

TUNE—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

This is a second version of the song which the poet composed in 1787; and although greatly inferior in many respects to the first, it has almost entirely superseded it. For the subject of the song, see the first version, p. 329.

YE banks and braes o' bonny Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!
Thou 'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons through the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed—never to return!

Oft hae I roved by bonny Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver stole my rose,
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

SIC A WIFE AS WILLIE HAD.

TUNE—"The Eight Men of Moidart."

Cunningham gives the following account of the lady said to be the heroine of this song:—"She was the wife of a farmer who lived near Burns at Ellisland. She was a very singular woman: 'tea,' she said, 'would be the ruin of the nation; sugar was a sore evil; wheaten bread was only fit for babes; earthenware was a pickpocket; wooden floors were but fit for thrashing upon; slated roofs, cold; feathers, good enough for fowls;' in short, she abhorred change, and, whenever anything new appeared, such as harrows with iron teeth—'Ay, ay,' she would exclaim, 'ye 'll see the upshot!' Of all modern things she disliked china most; she called it 'brunt clay,' and said it was only fit for 'haudin' the broo o' stinkin' weeds,' as she called tea. On one occasion, a southern dealer in cups and saucers asked so much for his ware that he exasperated a peasant, who said, 'I canna buy, but I ken ane that will:' 'Gang there,' said he, pointing to the house of Willie's wife:—'dinna be blate or burd-mouthed; ask a guid penny—she has the siller.' Away went the poor dealer, spread out his wares before her, and summed up all by asking a double price. A blow from her cummock was his instant reward, which not only fell on his person, but damaged his china—'I 'll learn ye,' quoth she, as she heard the saucers jingle, 'to come wi' yer brazent English face, and yer bits o' brunt clay to me!'"

WILLIE Wastle dwalt on Tweed,
The spot they ca'd it Linkum-doddie,
Willie was a wabster[1] guid,
Could stown[2] a clue wi' ony bodie:

---

[1] Weaver [2] Stolen.

He had a wife was dour and din,
Oh, Tinkler Madgie was her mither;
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her.

She has an ee—she has but ane,
The cat has twa the very colour;
Five rusty teeth, forbye[1] a stump,
A clapper-tongue wad deave a miller;
A whiskin' beard about her mou',
Her nose and chin they threaten ither—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her.

She 's bow-hough'd, she 's hein-shinn'd,
Ae limpin' leg, a hand-breed shorter;
She 's twisted right, she 's twisted left,
To balance fair in ilka quarter
She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her.

Auld baudrons[2] by the ingle[3] sits,
And wi' her loof[4] her face a-washin';
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,[5]
She dights her grunzie[6] wi' a hushion;[7]
Her walie nieves[8] like midden-creels,
Her face wad fyle the Logan Water—
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her.

SMILING SPRING COMES IN REJOICING.

TUNE—"The Bonny Bell."

THE smiling Spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly Winter grimly flies;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonny blue are the sunny skies;
Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The evening gilds the ocean's swell;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my bonny Bell.

The flowery Spring leads sunny Summer,
And yellow Autumn presses near,
Then in his turn comes gloomy Winter,
Till smiling Spring again appear.

---

[1] Besides. [2] The cat. [3] Fireplace. [4] Palm.
[5] Clean. [6] Mouth. [7] An old stocking. [8] Ample fists.

Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old Time and Nature their changes tell.
But never ranging, still unchanging,
I adore my bonny Bell.

THE GALLANT WEAVER.

TUNE—"The Weavers' March."

WHERE Cart * rins rowin' to the sea,
By mony a flower and spreading tree,
Their lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant weaver.
Oh, I had wooers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
And I was fear'd my heart would tine,[1]
And I gied it to the weaver.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,[2]
To gie the lad that has the land;
But to my heart I 'll add my hand,
And gie it to the weaver.
While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;
While bees delight in opening flowers;
While corn grows green in summer showers,
I 'll love my gallant weaver.

SHE'S FAIR AND FAUSE.

TUNE—"She's Fair and Fause."

SHE's fair and fause that causes my smart,
I lo'ed her meikle and lang;
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may e'en gae hang.
A coof[3] cam in wi' routh o' gear,[4]
And I hae tint[5] my dearest dear;
But woman is but warld's gear,
Sae let the bonny lassie gang.

Whae'er ye be that woman love,
To this be never blind,
Nae ferlie[6] 'tis, though fickle she prove,
A woman has 't by kind.

---

[1] Lose.
[2] Marriage-deed.
[3] Fool.
[4] Abundance of wealth.
[5] Lost.
[6] Wonder.

* The Cart is a river in Renfrewshire, which runs through the town of Paisley celebrated for the labours of the loom.

O woman, lovely woman fair!
An angel form 's fa'n to thy share;
'Twad been o'er meikle to gien[1] thee mair—
I mean an angel mind.

MY AIN KIND DEARIE, O.

TUNE—"The Lea-Rig."

WHEN o'er the hill the eastern star
Tells bughtin-time[2] is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrow'd field
Return sae dowf[3] and weary, O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks[4]
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,[5]
My ain kind dearie, O!

In mirkest[6] glen, at midnight hour,
I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie,[7] O;
If through that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie, O!
Although the night were ne'er sae wild,
And I were ne'er sae wearie, O,
I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin' gray,
It maks my heart sae cheery, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O!

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

The following lively lines, the poet tells us, were written extempore to the old air of "My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing:"—

SHE is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonny wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

---

[1] Have given. [2] Folding-time. [3] Dull. [4] Birches.
[5] Grassy ridge [6] Darkest. [7] Frightened.

I never saw a fairer,
I never lo'ed a dearer;
And neist my heart I'll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine.[1]

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonny wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

The warld's wrack we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't;
Wi' her I'll blithely bear it,
And think my lot divine.

HIGHLAND MARY.

TUNE—"Katharine Ogie."

This is another of those glorious lyrics inspired by the poet's passion for Highland Mary; and which celebrates, in strains worthy of the occasion, their last interview, and her untimely and lamented death. "The following song," he says, in a letter to Thomson, enclosing the verses, "pleases me; I think it is in my happiest manner. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, it is the still glowing prejudice of my heart that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition." See p. 361 for an account of Mary.

YE banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie![2]
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk![3]
How rich the hawthorn's blossom!
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary!

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;

---

[1] Be lost [2] Muddy. [3] Birch.

But, oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!—
Now green 's the sod, and cauld 's the clay
That wraps my Highland Mary!

Oh, pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly—
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary!

AULD ROB MORRIS.

The two first lines of the following song were taken from an old ballad—the rest is the poet's:—

THERE 's auld Rob Morris that wons[1] in yon glen,
He 's the king o' guid fellows and wale[2] of auld men;
He has gowd in his coffers, he has owsen and kine,
And ae bonny lassie, his darling and mine.

She 's fresh as the morning the fairest in May;
She 's sweet as the evening amang the new hay;
As blithe and as artless as lambs on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my ee.

But oh! she 's an heiress,—auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has nought but a cot-house and yard;
A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed;
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.[3]

The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane:
I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghaist,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

Oh, had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might hae hoped she'd hae smiled upon me!
Oh, how past describing[4] had then been my bliss,
As now my distraction no words can express!

DUNCAN GRAY.

This song was written on the model and to the tune of a coarse old ditty in Johnson's *Museum*, the name of the hero, and a line or two, being all that was retained.

---

[1] Dwells. [2] Choice. [3] Death. [4] Describing

DUNCAN GRAY cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't,
On blithe yule night when we were fou.
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,[1]
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh ;[2]
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.

Duncan fleech'd,[3] and Duncan pray'd,
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't ;
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,*
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't,
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat[4] his een baith bleert and blin',
Spak o' lowpin' o'er a linn ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.

Time and chance are but a tide ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't ;
Slighted love is sair to bide ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie die ?
She may gae to—France for me !
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.

How it comes let doctors tell ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't ;
Meg grew sick as he grew hale ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings ;
And oh, her een, they spak sic things !
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't ;
Maggie's was a piteous case ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.
Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd[5] his wrath ;
Now they 're crouse and canty[6] baith ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o 't.

---

1 Disdainful. 2 Aloof. 3 Flattered.
4 Wept. 5 Smothered. 6 Cheerful and happy

* A well-known rocky islet in the Frith of Clyde.

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
On blithe yule night when we were fou;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd askient and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

—*Duncan Gray, page* 410.

COCK UP YOUR BEAVER.

TUNE—"Cock up your beaver."

The second stanza only of this song is Burns's—the first is old.

WHEN first my brave Johnnie lad
Came to this town,
He had a blue bonnet
That wanted the crown;
But now he has gotten
A hat and a feather,—
Hey, brave Johnnie lad,
Cock up your beaver!

Cock up your beaver,
And cock it fu' sprush,
We'll over the Border
And gie them a brush;
There 's somebody there
We'll teach better behaviour—
Hey, brave Johnnie lad,
Cock up your beaver!

BONNY PEG.

The following lines first appeared in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for 1818

As I came in by our gate end,
As day was waxin' weary,
Oh, wha came tripping down the street,
But bonny Peg, my dearie!

Her air sae sweet, and shape complete,
Wi' nae proportion wanting,
The Queen of Love did never move
Wi' motion mair enchanting.

Wi' linkèd hands, we took the sands
Adown yon winding river;
And, oh! that hour and broomy bower,
Can I forget it ever?

THE TITHER MORN.

To a Highland Air.

THE tither morn,
When I forlorn,
Aneath an aik sat moaning,

I did na trow[1]
I'd see my jo[2]
Beside me gin the gloaming.
But he sae trig[3]
Lap o'er the rig,
And dawtingly[4] did cheer me,
When I, what reck,
Did least expec'
To see my lad sae near me.

His bonnet he,
A thought ajee,
Cock'd sprush when first he clasp'd me;
And I, I wat,[5]
Wi' fainness grat,[6]
While in his grips he press'd me.
Deil tak' the war!
I late and air
Hae wish'd since Jock departed;
But now as glad
I'm wi' my lad
As short syne broken-hearted.

Fu' aft at e'en
Wi' dancing keen,
When a' were blithe and merry,
I cared na by,
Sae sad was I
In absence o' my dearie.
But, praise be blest,
My mind's at rest,
I'm happy wi' my Johnny;
At kirk and fair,
I'se aye be there,
And be as canty 's[7] ony.

THE DEUK'S DANG O'ER MY DADDIE, O.

TUNE—"The deuk's dang o'er my daddie."

THE bairns gat out wi' an unco shout,
The deuk's[8] dang o'er my daddie, O!
The fient may care, quo' the feirie[9] auld wife,
He was but a paidlin[10] body, O!
He paidles out, and he paidles in,
And he paidles late and early, O!
Thae seven lang years I hae lien by his side,
And he is but a fusionless[11] carlie, O!

---

1 Think. 2 Dear. 3 Neat. 4 Lovingly.
5 Know. 6 Wept. 7 Happy. 8 Duck.
9 Sturdy. 10 Wandering aimlessly about. 11 Sapless.

Oh, haud your tongue, my feirie auld wife,
Oh, haud your tongue now, Nansie, O!
I 've seen the day, and sae hae ye,
Ye wadna been sae donsie,[1] O!
I 've seen the day ye butter'd my brose,
And cuddled[2] me late and early, O;
But downa do 's[3] come o'er me now,
And, oh! I feel it sairly, O!

HAPPY FRIENDSHIP.

Cunningham gives the following account of this song, which first appeared in his edition of the poet's works:—"Burns, on one occasion, was on a visit at a friend's house for two or three days; and during his stay there a convivial party met, at which the bard was requested to favour the company with a poetical effusion. He promptly complied by writing the song in question. The original MS. is now in the possession of Captain Hendries, who commands a Scottish trading vessel, and who is nephew to the gentleman at whose festive board Burns was entertained on the evening alluded to."

HERE around the ingle[4] bleezing,
Wha sae happy and sae free;
Though the northern wind blaws freezing,
Frien'ship warms baith you and me.

CHORUS.

Happy we are a' thegither,
Happy we 'll be yin and a';
Time shall see us a' the blither,
Ere we rise to gang awa'.

See the miser o'er his treasure
Gloating wi' a greedy ee!
Can he feel the glow o' pleasure
That around us here we see?

Can the peer, in silk and ermine,
Ca' his conscience half his own;
His claes[5] are spun and edged wi' vermin,
Though he stan' afore a throne!

Thus, then, let us a' be tassing[6]
Aff our stoups o' gen'rous flame;
And, while round the board 'tis passing,
Raise a sang in frien'ship's name.

Frien'ship maks us a' mair happy,
Frien'ship gies us a' delight;
Frien'ship consecrates the drappie,
Frien'ship brings us here to-night.

---

1 Pettish. 2 Fondled. 3 A phrase signifying the exhaustion of age
4 Fireside. 5 Clothes. 6 Tossing.

OH, SAW YE MY DEARIE.

TUNE—"Eppie M'Nab."

Oh, saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
Oh, saw ye my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She 's down in the yard, she 's kissin' the laird,
She winna come hame to her ain Jock Rab.

Oh, come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
Oh, come thy ways to me, my Eppie M'Nab!
Whate'er thou hast done, be it late, be it soon,
Thou 's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
What says she, my dearie, my Eppie M'Nab?
She lets thee to wit,[1] that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.

Oh, had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
Oh, had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie M'Nab!
As light as the air, as fause as thou 's fair,
Thou 's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

THE CARLE OF KELLYBURN BRAES.

TUNE—"Kellyburn Braes"

This is an old song which the poet considerably modified and amended. When Mrs Burns was informing Cromek of the alterations her husband had made on various old songs, she said of the following, "Robert gae this ane a terrible brushing;"—

THERE lived a carle[2] in Kellyburn braes,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme;)
And he had a wife was the plague o' his days;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Ae day as the carle gaed[3] up the lang glen,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
He met wi' the devil, says, "How do you fen?[4]"
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

"I 've got a bad wife, sir; that 's a' my complaint;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
For, saving your presence, to her ye 're a saint;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

"It 's neither your stot[5] nor your staig[6] I shall crave,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)

---

[1] Know. [2] Man [3] Went.
[4] Live [5] Bullock. [6] Colt

But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.'

"Oh! welcome, most kindly," the blithe carle said,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
"But if ye can match her, ye 're waur than ye 're ca'd
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

The devil has got the auld wife on his back;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
And, like a poor pedlar, he 's carried his pack,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

He 's carried her hame to his ain hallan-door;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
Syne bade her gae in, for a bitch and a whore,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
Turn out on her guard in the clap of a hand;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The carlin[1] gaed through them like ony wud[2] bear,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
Whae'er she gat hands on cam near her nae mair;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

A reekit[3] wee devil looks over the wa';
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
"Oh, help, master, help! or she 'll ruin us a',
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

The devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
He was not in wedlock, thank Heaven, but in hell:
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then Satan has travell'd again wi' his pack;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
And to her auld husband he 's carried her back;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

"I hae been a devil the feck[4] o' my life;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonny wi' thyme,)
But ne'er was in hell, till I met wi' a wife;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime."

---

[1] Woman. [2] Wild. [3] Smoked [4] Most

YE JACOBITES BY NAME.

TUNE—"Ye Jacobites by Name."

Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear:
Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear;
Ye Jacobites by name,
Your fauts I will proclaim,
Your doctrines I maun blame—
You shall hear.

What is right, and what is wrang, by the law, by the law:
What is right, and what is wrang, by the law?
What is right, and what is wrang?
A short sword, and a lang,
A weak arm, and a strang
For to draw.

What makes heroic strife famed afar, famed afar?
What makes heroic strife famed afar?
What makes heroic strife?
To whet th' assassin's knife,
Or hunt a parent's life
Wi' bluidie war.

Then let your schemes alone, in the state, in the state;
Then let your schemes alone, in the state;
Then let your schemes alone,
Adore the rising sun,
And leave a man undone
To his fate.

AS I WAS A-WANDERING.

TUNE—"Rinn Meudial mo Mhealladh."

As I was a-wandering ae midsummer e'enin',
The pipers and youngsters were making their game,
Amang them I spied my faithless fause lover,
Which bled a' the wound o' my dolour again.

Weel, since he has left me, may pleasure gae wi' him;
I may be distress'd, but I winna complain
I'll flatter my fancy I may get anither,
My heart it shall never be broken for ane.

I couldna get sleeping till dawin[1] for greeting,[2]
The tears trickled down like the hail and the rain:
Had I na got greeting, my heart wad a broken,
For, oh! luve forsaken's a tormenting pain!

---

1 Dawn 2 Weeping

Although he has left me for greed o' the siller,
I dinna envy him the gains he can win;
I rather wad bear a' the lade o' my sorrow
Than ever hae acted sae faithless to him.

THE SLAVE'S LAMENT.

Regarding the authenticity of this song, Stenhouse says that the words and music were sent by the poet to the *Museum*; while Mr C. K. Sharpe asserts that Burns took the idea of the song from an old ballad at one time very popular amongst the peasantry in Scotland. The piece appears to have been formed on the model of the verses entitled, "The Ruined Farmer's Lament," (p. 326,) as it bears a very close resemblance to them.

It was in sweet Senegal that my foes did me enthral,
For the lands of Virginia, O;
Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more,
And alas I am weary, weary, O!

All on that charming coast is no bitter snow or frost,
Like the lands of Virginia, O;
There streams for ever flow, and there flowers for ever blow,
And alas I am weary, weary, O!

The burden I must bear, while the cruel scourge I fear,
In the lands of Virginia, O;
And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear.
And alas I am weary, weary, O!

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

TUNE—"The Weary Pund o' Tow."

I BOUGHT my wife a stane o' lint[1]
As guid as e'er did grow;
And a' that she has made o' that
Is ae poor pund o' tow.[2]

The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow;
I think my wife will end her life
Before she spin her tow.

There sat a bottle in a bole,
Beyont the ingle low,[3]
And aye she took the tither souk,[4]
To drouk[5] the stourie[6] tow.

---

[1] Flax. [2] Hemp or flax in a prepared state. [3] Flame of the fire. [4] Swig. [5] Drench. [6] Dusty.

Quoth I, "For shame, ye dirty dame.
Gae spin your tap o' tow!"
She took the rock, and wi' a knock
She brak it o'er my pow.

At last her feet—I sang to see 't—
Gaed foremost o'er the knowe;[1]
And or I wad anither jad,
I'll wallop in a tow.[2]

LADY MARY ANN.

TUNE—"Craigton's Growing."

The poet having had an old ballad called "Craigton's Growing" chanted to him while on a tour in the Highlands, afterwards mused over it, and produced the following verses, which he sent to the *Museum*:—

Oh, Lady Mary Ann
Looks o'er the castle wa',
She saw three bonny boys
Playing at the ba';
The youngest he was
The flower amang them a'
My bonny laddie's young,
But he's growin' yet.

O father! O father!
An ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year
To the college yet:
We'll sew a green ribbon
Round about his hat,
And that will let them ken
He's to marry yet.

Lady Mary Ann
Was a flower i' the dew,
Sweet was its smell,
And bonny was its hue;
And the langer it blossom'd
The sweeter it grew;
For the lily in the bud
Will be bonnier yet.

Young Charlie Cochrane
Was the sprout of an aik;
Bonny and bloomin'
And straught was its make

---

[1] Hillock [2] Swing in a rope.

The sun took delight
To shine for its sake,
And it will be the brag
O' the forest yet.

The simmer is gane
When the leaves they were green,
And the days are awa'
That we hae seen;
But far better days
I trust will come again,
For my bonny laddie's young,
But he 's growin' yet.

OH, KENMURE'S ON AND AWA'.

TUNE—"Oh, Kenmure's on and awa', Willie."

This song," says Cunningham, "refers to the fortunes of the gallant Gordons of Kenmure in the fatal 'Fifteen.' The Viscount left Galloway with two hundred horsemen well armed; he joined the other lowland Jacobites—penetrated to Preston—repulsed, and at last yielded to, the attack of General Carpenter—and perished on the scaffold. He was a good as well as a brave man, and his fate was deeply lamented. The title has since been restored to the Gordon's line." Burns was, once at least, an invited guest at Kenmure Castle, near New Galloway.

OH, Kenmure 's on and awa', Willie!
Oh, Kenmure 's on and awa'!
And Kenmure's lord 's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw.

Success to Kenmure's band, Willie!
Success to Kenmure's band;
There 's no a heart that fears a Whig
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here 's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie!
Here 's Kenmure's health in wine;
There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

Oh, Kenmure's lads are men, Willie!
Oh, Kenmure's lads are men;
Their hearts and swords are metal true—
And that their faes shall ken.

They 'll live or die wi' fame, Willie!
They 'll live or die wi' fame;
But soon wi' sounding victorie
May Kenmure's lord come hame.

Here 's him that 's far awa', Willie!
Here 's him that 's far awa'!
And here 's the flower that I lo'e best—
The rose that 's like the snaw!

MY COLLIER LADDIE.

TUNE—"The Collier Laddie."

"I do not know," says Burns, "a blither old song than this;" which he modified and altered, and then sent to the *Museum*.

OH, whare live ye, my bonny lass?
And tell me what they ca' ye?
My name, she says, is Mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier Laddie.
My name, she says, is Mistress Jean,
And I follow the Collier Laddie.

Oh, see you not yon hills and dales,
The sun shines on sae brawlie!
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye 'll leave your Collier Laddie.
They a' are mine, and they shall be thine,
Gin ye 'll leave your Collier Laddie.

And ye shall gang in gay attire,
Weel buskit[1] up sae gaudy;
And ane to wait at every hand,
Gin ye 'll leave your Collier Laddie.
And ane to wait at every hand,
Gin ye 'll leave your Collier Laddie.

Though ye had a' the sun shines on,
And the earth conceals sae lowly,
I wad turn my back on you and it a',
And embrace my Collier Laddie.
I wad turn my back on you and it a'.
And embrace my Collier Laddie.

I can win my five pennies a day,
And spen 't at night fu' brawlie;
And mak my bed in the Collier's neuk,[2]
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.
And mak my bed in the Collier's neuk,
And lie down wi' my Collier Laddie.

Luve for luve is the bargain for me,
Though the wee cot-house should haud me;
And the warld before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie.
And the warld before me to win my bread,
And fair fa' my Collier Laddie.

---

[1] Dressed. [2] Hut.

FAREWEEL TO A' OUR SCOTTISH FAME.

TUNE—"Such a Parcel of Rogues in a Nation."

'Burns," says Cunningham, "has expressed sentiments in this song which were once popular in the north." The poet himself, indeed, appears to have been in the habit of expressing his feelings pretty freely regarding the Union. "What," he exclaimed on one occasion, "are all the advantages which my country reaps from the Union that can counterbalance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name? Nothing can reconcile me to the terms. '*English* Ambassador,' '*English* Court,'" &c.

FAREWEEL to a' our Scottish fame,
Fareweel our ancient glory!
Fareweel even to the Scottish name,
Sae famed in martial story!
Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands,
And Tweed rins to the ocean,
To mark where England's province stands—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

What force or guile could not subdue,
Through many warlike ages,
Is wrought now by a coward few,
For hireling traitors' wages.
The English steel we could disdain,
Secure in valour's station;
But English gold has been our bane—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation!

Oh, would, ere I had seen the day
That treason thus could sell us,
My auld gray head had lien in clay,
Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace!
But pith and power, till my last hour,
I'll mak this declaration;
We're bought and sold for English gold—
Such a parcel of rogues in a nation.

HERE'S A HEALTH TO THEM THAT'S AWA'.

TUNE—"Here's a health to them that's awa'."

The poet's political predilections at this period of his life being somewhat marked, and of an ultra-liberal tendency, he is supposed to have thrown them into the following song, composed in honour of the leaders of the liberal party in the House of Commons:—

HERE'S a health to them that's awa',
Here's a health to them that's awa';
And wha winna wish guid luck to our cause,
May never guid luck be their fa'!

It's guid to be merry and wise,
It's guid to be honest and true,
It's guid to support Caledonia's cause,
And bide by the buff and the blue.

Here's a health to them that 's awa',
Here's a health to them that 's awa',
Here's a health to Charlie* the chief of the clan,
Although that his band be but sma'.
May Liberty meet wi' success!
May Prudence protect her frae evil!
May tyrants and tyranny tine in the mist,
And wander their way to the devil!

Here's a health to them that 's awa',
Here's a health to them that 's awa';
Here's a health to Tammie,† the Norland laddie,
That lives at the lug o' the law!
Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write!
There 's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be heard
But they wham the truth wad indite.[1]

Here's a health to them that 's awa',
Here's a health to them that 's awa',
Here's Chieftain M'Leod,‡ a chieftain worth gowd,
Though bred amang mountains o' snaw!
Here's a health to them that 's awa',
Here's a health to them that 's awa';
And wha winna wish guid luck to our cause,
May never guid luck be their fa'!

SONG.

TUNE—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

Gilbert Burns says that a Miss Jane Blackstock, who afterwards became Mrs Whiter, of Liverpool, was the heroine of this song. The poet, in a letter to Thomson, said, "For private reasons, I should like to see it in print."

OH, poortith[2] cauld and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
An 'twere na for my Jeanie.

---

[1] Indict—impeach. [2] Poverty.

* The Right Hon. Charles James Fox. Buff and blue formed the livery of Fox during the celebrated Westminster elections, and thus came to be adopted as the colours of the Whig party generally.

† Thomas, afterwards Lord, Erskine.

‡ M'Leod of Dunvegan, Isle of Skye, and then M.P. for Inverness.

Oh, why should Fate sic pleasure have.
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?

This warld's wealth when I think on,
Its pride, and a' the lave o 't—
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o 't!

Her een sae bonny blue betray
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her o'erword[1] aye,
She talks of rank and fashion.

Oh, wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
Oh, wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?

How blest the humble cotter's fate!
He wooes his simple dearie;
The silly bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make them eerie.[2]

GALA WATER.

THERE 's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander through the blooming heather.
But Yarrow braes[3] nor Ettrick shaws[4]
Can match the lads o' Gala Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I lo'e him better;
And I 'll be his, and he 'll be mine,
The bonny lad o' Gala Water.

Although his daddie was nae laird,
And though I haena meikle tocher;[5]
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We 'll tent our flocks by Gala Water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft[6] contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
Oh, that 's the chiefest warld's treasure!

---

1 Refrain. 2 Afraid. 3 Hills.
4 Woods. 5 Much money. 6 Bought

LORD GREGORY.

This song was written in imitation of Dr Wolcot's (Peter Pindar) ballad on the same subject,* of which Burns says, in a letter to Thomson, "Pindar's 'Lord Gregory' is beautiful. I have tried to give you a Scots version, which is at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter: that would be presumption indeed! My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has, I think, more of the ballad simplicity in it." The idea of both songs, however, is taken from an old strain

Oh, mirk,[1] mirk is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempest's roar;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tower—
Lord Gregory, ope thy door!

An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;
At least some pity on me shaw,
If love it may na be.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove
By bonny Irwin-side,
Where first I own'd that virgin love
I lang, lang had denied?

How aften didst thou pledge and vow
Thou wad for aye be mine;
And my fond heart, itsel sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast—
Thou dart of heaven that flashest by,
Oh, wilt thou give me rest!

---

[1] Dark

* The following is Wolcot's version:—

"Ah, ope, Lord Gregory, thy door!
A midnight wanderer sighs,
Hard rush the rains, the tempests roar,
And lightnings cleave the skies.

"Who comes with woe at this drear night—
A pilgrim of the gloom?
If she whose love did once delight,
My cot shall yield her room.

"Alas! thou heard'st a pilgrim mourn
That once was prized by thee;
Think of the ring by yonder burn
Thou gavest to love and me.

"But shouldst thou not poor Marian know
I'll turn my feet and part;
And think the storms that round me blow
Far kinder than thy heart."

Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see!
But spare, and pardon my fause love
His wrangs to Heaven and me!

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH!

"Oh, open the door, some pity to show,
Oh, open the door to me, oh!
Though thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, oh!

"Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, oh!
The frost that freezes the life at my heart
Is nought to my pains frae thee, oh!

"The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is setting with me, oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them nor thee, oh!"

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide;
She sees his pale corse on the plain, oh!
"My true love!" she cried, and sank down by his side,
Never to rise again, oh!

YOUNG JESSIE.

TUNE—"Bonny Dundee."

This song was written in honour of Miss Janet Staig, daughter of the Provost of Dumfries, and afterwards the wife of Major William Miller, one of the sons of Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, the poet's landlord, in Dumfriesshire. The lady died in 1801, at the early age of twenty-six, and was long remembered in the district for her beauty and gentleness.

TRUE-hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the Ayr,
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river
Are lovers as faithful and maidens as fair:
To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain;
Grace, beauty, and elegance fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

Oh, fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.

Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;
Enthroned in her een he delivers his law:
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger—
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a'!

THE POOR AND HONEST SODGER.

AIR—"The Mill, Mill O!"

A correspondent of Thomson's says, regarding the origin of this song:—"Burns, I have been informed, was one summer evening at the inn at Brownhill with a couple of friends, when a poor wayworn soldier passed the window: of a sudden, it struck the poet to call him in, and get the story of his adventures; after listening to which, he all at once fell into one of those fits of abstraction not unusual with him. He was lifted to the region where he had his 'garland and singing robes about him,' and the result was the admirable song which he sent you for 'The Mill, Mill, O!'" Mill-Mannoch, says Chambers, a sweet pastoral scene on the Coyl, near Coylton Kirk, is thought to have been the spot where the poet imagined the meeting of the lovers to have taken place

WHEN wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning;
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I 'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

A leal light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder,
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
I cheery on did wander.
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonny glen
Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill, and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted:
Wha spied[1] I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, "Sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
Oh! happy, happy may he be,
That 's dearest to thy bosom!

[1] Saw.

She gazed—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale like ony lily;
She sank within my arms and cried,
"Art thou my ain dear Willie?"

—*The Poor and Honest Sudger*, *page* 426.

My purse is light, I 've far to gang,
And fain wad be thy lodger;
I 've served my king and country lang
Take pity on a sodger."

Sae wistfully she gazed on me,
And lovelier was than ever;
Quo' she, "A sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never:
Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it,
That gallant badge—the dear cockade-
Ye 're welcome for the sake o 't."

She gazed—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne[1] pale like ony lily;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
"Art thou my ain dear Willie?"
"By Him who made yon sun and sky,
By whom true love 's regarded,
I am the man; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded!

"The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted;
Though poor in gear, we 're rich in love,
And mair, we 'se ne'er be parted."
Quo' she, "My grandsire left me gowd,
A mailen[2] plenish'd fairly;
And come, my faithful sodger lad,
Thou 'rt welcome to it dearly!"

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honour:
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger;
Remember, he 's his country's stay
In day and hour of danger.

MEG O' THE MILL.

AIR—"Hey! bonny lass, will you lie in a barrack?"

Oh, ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
And ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof[3] wi' a claut o' siller,[4]
And broken the heart o' the barley miller.

[1] Then. [2] Farm. [3] Lout. [4] Plenty of money

The miller was strappin', the miller was ruddy .
A heart like a lord, and a hue like a lady;
The laird was a widdiefu', bleerit knurl;[1]
She 's left the guid-fellow and ta'en the churl.

The miller he hecht[2] her a heart leal and loving;
The laird did address her wi' matter mair moving
A fine-pacing horse, wi' a clear-chain'd bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonny side-saddle.

Oh, wae on the siller, it is sae prevailing;
And wae on the love that is fix'd on a maiden![3]
A tocher's[4] nae word in a true lover's parle,
But, gie me my love, and a fig for the warl'!

WELCOME TO GENERAL DUMOURIER.

Some one, in the presence of the poet, having expressed joy at the desertion of General Dumourier from the army of the French Republic, in 1793, after having gained some splendid victories with it, in a few moments he chanted almost extempore, the following verses to the tune of "Robin Adair:"—

YOU 'RE welcome to despots, Dumourier;
You 're welcome to despots, Dumourier;
How does Dampiere* do?
Ay, and Beurnonville† too?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumourier?
I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you, Dumourier;
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you;
By my soul, I 'll dance a dance with you, Dumourier.

Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about,
Till Freedom's spark is out,
Then we 'll be damn'd, no doubt, Dumourier.

THE LAST TIME I CAME O'ER THE MOOR.

In this song the poet is supposed to have given expression to certain feelings of illicit love which it is known he entertained for the beautiful and fascinating Mrs Riddel of Woodley Park, for a further account of whom, see p. 461. It is but just to remember, however, and charitable to believe, that the poet, with an eye to artistic effect, may have purposely heightened his colours in order to increase the general effect of his picture.

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[1] Ill-tempered, bleared dwarf. [2] Offered. [3] Farm. [4] Dowery.

* One of Dumourier's generals. † An emissary of the Convention's

THE last time I came o'er the moor,
And left Maria's dwelling,
What throes, what tortures passing cure
Were in my bosom swelling:
Condemned to see my rival's reign,
While I in secret languish;
To feel a fire in every vein,
Yet dare not speak my anguish.

Love's veriest wretch, despairing, I
Fain, fain my crime would cover:
The unweeting groan, the bursting sigh
Betray the guilty lover.
I know my doom must be despair,
Thou wilt nor canst relieve me;
But, O Maria, hear my prayer,
For pity's sake, forgive me!

The music of thy tongue I heard,
Nor wist while it enslaved me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fears no more had saved me.
The unwary sailor thus aghast
The wheeling torrent viewing,
In circling horrors yields at last
In overwhelming ruin!

BLITHE HAE I BEEN.

TUNE—"Liggeram Cosh."

The "Lesley is sae fair and coy" of this song was the beautiful Miss Lesley Baillie with whom the poet told Mrs Dunlop he was almost in love, and whom he made the heroine of the song entitled, "Bonny Lesley," (p. 392.) She appears to have been one of those goddesses who were eternally crossing his path, and whose attractions formed, as his brother Gilbert tells us, so many under plots in the drama of his all-embracing love.

BLITHE hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless ilka thought and free,
As the breeze flew o'er me.
Now nae langer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
Lesley is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring:
Trembling, I dow nocht but glower,[1]
Sighing, dumb, despairing!

---

[1] Dare nought but stare.

If she winna ease the thraws [1]
In my bosom swelling;
Underneath the grass-green sod,
Soon maun be my dwelling.

LOGAN BRAES.

TUNE—"Logan Water.'

The poet, in a letter to Thomson, enclosing this song, says, regarding its origin—"Have you ever, my dear sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste, out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of 'Logan Water,' and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer; and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done anything at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit." The two last lines of the first stanza the poet took from a very pretty song to the same air, written by Mr John Mayne, author of a poem entitled, "The Siller Gun."

O LOGAN, sweetly didst thou glide
That day I was my Willie's bride!
And years sinsyne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flowery banks appear
Like drumlie [2] Winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes!

Again the merry month o' May
Has made our hills and valleys gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers:
Blithe morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy:
My soul, delightless, a' surveys,
While Willie 's far frae Logan braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile:
But I, wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days
While Willie 's far frae Logan braes.

---

[1] Throes.

[2] Clouded and rainy.

Oh, wae upon you, men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?
But soon may peace bring happy days
And Willie-hame to Logan braes!

THERE WAS A LASS, AND SHE WAS FAIR.

TUNE—"Bonny Jean."

I have just finished the following ballad," says the poet to Thomson, "and as I do think it is in my best style, I send it to you." The heroine of this song was Miss Jane M'Murdo, the eldest daughter of John M'Murdo, Esq., chamberlain to the Duke of Queensberry, and who resided with a family of charming and accomplished daughters at the ducal seat of Drumlanrig, a few miles from the poet's farm. A frequent guest at this gentleman's table, he appears to have lived on terms of intimacy with the entire family. The heroine, he tells us, he did not paint in the rank which she held in life; but in the dress and character of a cottager.

THERE was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen,
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonny Jean.

And aye she wrought her mammie's wark,
And aye she sang sae merrilie:
The blithest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bliss the little lintwhite's nest:
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies[1] nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,[2]
He danced wi' Jeanie on the down;
And, lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint,[3] her peace was stown.[4]

As in the bosom o' the stream,
The moonbeam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast o' bonny Jean

---

[1] Horses. [2] Fair [3] Lost. [4] Stolen

And now she works her mammie's wark
And aye she sighs wi' care and pain;
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad mak her weel again.

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her ee,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love
Ae e'enin' on the lily lea?

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to hers he fondly prest,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:—

"O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
Oh, canst thou think to fancy me?
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent[1] the farms wi' me?

"At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me."

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was aye between them twa.

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

TUNE—"Robin Adair."

Miss Philadelphia M'Murdo, one of the daughters of John M'Murdo, Esq., mentioned above, and who afterwards became Mrs Norman Lockhart of Carnwath, was the heroine of this song. The poet is supposed to have written the lines at the request of his friend, Stephen Clarke the musician, who taught the young lady music, and was nearly in love with his charming pupil, "Phillis the fair."

WHILE larks with little wing
Fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare:
Gay the sun's golden eye
Peep'd o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry,
Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song
Glad did I share;

---

[1] Mind.

While yon wild flowers among,
Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say,
Phillis the fair.

Down in a shady walk
Doves cooing were;
I mark'd the cruel hawk
Caught in a snare:
So kind may Fortune be,
Such make his destiny!
He who would injure thee,
Phillis the fair.

HAD I A CAVE.

TUNE—"Robin Adair."

Mr Alexander Cunningham, a writer to the signet in Edinburgh, and a warm friend of the poet's, had wooed and, as he thought, won, a young lady of great beauty and accomplishments; but another lover having presented himself, with *weightier* claims to her regard than poor Cunningham possessed,

"The fickle, faithless queen,
To ook the carl and left her Johnnie;"

and appears to have cast him off with as little ceremony as she would a piece of faded frippery. The poet, in the following lines, has endeavoured to express the feelings of his friend on the occasion:—

HAD I a cave on some wild, distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar:
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare
All thy fond plighted vows fleeting as air!
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there!

BY ALLAN STREAM I CHANCED TO ROVE.

TUNE—"Allan Water."

In a letter to Thomson, dated August 1793, enclosing this song, the poet says:—"I walked out yesterday evening with a volume of the *Museum* in my hand, when, turning up 'Allan Water,' as the words appeared to me rather unworthy

or so fine an air, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong, but I think it not in my worst style. Bravo! say I; it is a good song. Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than all the year else."

By Allan stream I chanced to rove,
While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi;
The winds were whispering through the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
And thought on youthfu' pleasures many;
And aye the wild wood echoes rang—
Oh, dearly do I love thee, Annie!

Oh, happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly bogle make it eerie;[1]
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my dearie!
Her head upon my throbbing breast,
She, sinking, said, "I'm thine for ever!"
While mony a kiss the seal imprest,
The sacred vow,—we ne'er should sever.

The haunt o' Spring's the primrose brae,
The Simmer joys the flocks to follow;
How cheery, through her shortening day,
Is Autumn in her weeds o' yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or through each nerve the rapture dart,
Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

OH, WHISTLE, AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD.

Tune—"Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad."

"The old air of 'Whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,'" says the poet to Thomson, "I admire very much, and yesterday I set the following verses to it:"—

Oh, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
Oh, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad:
Though father and mither and a' should gae mad,
Oh, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent[2] when you come to court me,
And come na unless the back yett[3] be a-jee;
Syne up the back stile, and let naebody see,
And come as ye were na comin' to me.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as though that ye cared na a flie;

---

[1] Frightsome. [2] Carefully heed [3] Gate.

But steal me a blink o' your bonny black ee,
Yet look as ye were na looking at me.

Aye vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whiles ye may lightly[1] my beauty a wee;
But court na anither, though jokin' ye be,
For fear that she wile your fancy frae me.

ADOWN WINDING NITH.

TUNE—"The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre."

The Phillis of this song is thought to have been Miss Philadelphia M'Murdo, the heroine of the lines to "Phillis the Fair," in p. 432.

ADOWN winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

Awa' wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare:
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

The daisy amused my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillis,
For she is Simplicity's child.

The rosebud 's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest:
How fair and how pure is the lily,
But fairer and purer her breast!

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie:
Her breath is the breath o' the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond her eye.

Her voice is the song of the morning,
That wakes through the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.

But beauty how frail and how fleeting,
The bloom of a fine summer's day!
While worth in the mind o' my Phillis
Will flourish without a decay.

[1] Disparage.

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE.

AIR—"Cauld Kail."

COME, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The warld's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone,
That I may live to love her.

Thus in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' heaven to share
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy een, sae bonny blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never!

DAINTY DAVIE.

This is an improved version of a song which the poet wrote some years before for the *Museum*, and which will be found at p. 368. The old song which furnished the air is said to have been composed on a somewhat indelicate incident that occurred in the life of the Rev. David Williamson, during the times of the Persecution in Scotland. This worthy, it is affirmed, after having married seven wives, died minister of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh.

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay green-spreading bowers;
And now comes in my happy hours
To wander wi' my Davie.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw
A-wandering wi' my Davie.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,
Then through the dews I will repair
To meet my faithfu' Davie.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that 's my ain dear Davie.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY AT BANNOCKBURN.

TUNE—"Hey, tuttie taitie."

"There is a tradition," says the poet, in a letter to Thomson, enclosing this glorious ode, "that the old air, 'Hey tuttie taitie,' was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, has warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence which I have thrown into a kind of Scottish ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning." This ode, says Professor Wilson—the grandest out of the Bible—is sublime!

SCOTS, wha hae wi' WALLACE bled,
Scots, wham BRUCE has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to Victory!

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha, for SCOTLAND'S king and law,
FREEDOM'S sword will strongly draw;
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By Oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
LIBERTY'S in every blow!—
Let us do or die!

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER.

TUNE—"Fee him, father."

The poet, in sending these verses to Thomson, says—"I do not give them for any merit they have. I composed them about the 'back o' midnight,' and by the fireside of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company except the Muse."

THOU hast left me ever, Jamie!
Thou hast left me ever;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie!
Thou hast left me ever.
Aften hast thou vow'd that death
Only should us sever;
Now thou 'st left thy lass for aye—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I 'll see thee never!

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie!
Thou hast me forsaken;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie!
Thou hast me forsaken.
Thou canst love anither jo,
While my heart is breaking:
Soon my weary een I 'll close—
Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Ne'er mair to waken!

FAIR JENNY.

TUNE—"Saw ye my father."

WHERE are the joys I have met in the morning,
That danced to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wandering,
At evening the wild woods among?

No more a-winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flowerets so fair;
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad sighing care.

Is it that Summer 's forsaken our valleys,
And grim, surly Winter is near?
No, no! the bees humming round the gay roses
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

Fain would I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known:
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

TUNE—"The Collier's Bonny Lassie."

DELUDED swain, the pleasure
The fickle fair can give thee
Is but a fairy treasure—
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds' uncertain motion—
They are but types of woman.

Oh! art thou not ashamed
To doat upon a feature?
If man thou wouldst be named,
Despise the silly creature.

Go, find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee:
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory.

MY SPOUSE, NANCY.

TUNE—"My Jo, Janet."

"HUSBAND, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, sir;
Though I am your wedded wife,
Yet I am not your slave, sir."

"One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy;
Is it man, or woman, say,
My spouse, Nancy?"

"If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sovereign lord,
And so, good-by, allegiance!"

"Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse, Nancy."

"My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think how you will bear it."

"I will hope and trust in Heaven,
Nancy, Nancy;
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse, Nancy."

"Well, sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you;
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you."

"I'll wed another, like my dear
Nancy, Nancy;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse, Nancy."

OH, WERE MY LOVE YON LILAC FAIR.

TUNE—"Hughie Graham."

The first two stanzas only of this song are by Burns; the other two are old.

Oh, were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing.

How I wad mourn, when it was torn,
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I wad sing, on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

Oh, gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysel a drap o' dew,
Into her bonny breast to fa'!

Oh! there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd[1] awa' by Phœbus' light!

[1] Frightened.

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS.

TUNE—"The Lass of Inverness."

Burns's most successful imitation of the old style of ballad composition, says Cromek, seems to be in "The Lovely Lass of Inverness."

THE lovely lass of Inverness
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, alas!
And aye the saut tear blin's her ee:
Drumossie Moor—Drumossie day—
A waefu' day it was to me!
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see:
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's ee!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee.

A RED, RED ROSE.

TUNE—"Graham's Strathspey."

This song was composed by the poet as an improvement of a street ballad, which is said to have been written by a Lieutenant Hinches, as a farewell to his sweetheart, when on the eve of parting.

OH, my luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
Oh, my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonny lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

A VISION.

The following lines were written amid the ruins of Lincluden Abbey, a favourite haunt of the poet's. He contributed a version somewhat different to the *Scot's Musical Museum*:—

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where the howlet[1] mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care;

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream, adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whose distant roaring swells and fa's.

The cauld blue North was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissin', eerie din:
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like Fortune's favours, tint[2] as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And, by the moonbeam, shook to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attired as minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His daring look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet graved was plain,
The sacred posy—"Liberty!"

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might roused the slumbering dead to hear:
But, oh! it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He sang wi' joy the former day,
He, weeping, wail'd his latter times;
But what he said it was nae play—
I winna venture't in my rhymes.

OUT OVER THE FORTH.

TUNE—"Charlie Gordon's Welcome Hame."

OUT over the Forth I look to the north,
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?

[1] Owl. [2] Lost

The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land, or the wild-rolling sea.

But I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For far in the west lives he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my baby and me.

JEANIE'S BOSOM.

TUNE—"Louis, what reck I by thee?"

LOUIS, what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean?
Dyvor,[1] beggar loons to me—
I reign in Jeanie's bosom.

Let her crown my love her law,
And in her breast enthrone me:
King and nations—swith, awa'!
Reif-randies,[2] I disown ye!

FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEBODY.

TUNE—"For the Sake of Somebody."

MY heart is sair—I dare na tell—
My heart is sair for Somebody;
I could wake a winter night
For the sake o' Somebody.
Oh-hon! for Somebody!
Oh-hey! for Somebody!
I could range the world around,
For the sake o' Somebody!

Ye Powers that smile on virtuous love,
Oh, sweetly smile on Somebody!
Frae ilka danger keep him free,
And send me safe my Somebody.
Oh-hon! for Somebody!
Oh-hey! for Somebody!
I wad do—what wad I not?
For the sake o' Somebody!

[1] Bankrupt. [2] Thieving-beggars.

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE.

AIR—"The Sutor's Dochter."

WILT thou be my dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart.
Wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or, if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou, for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'est me.
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

LOVELY POLLY STEWART.

TUNE—"Ye're welcome, Charlie Stewart."

The heroine of this song was the daughter of a Mr William Stewart, a neighbour of the poet's at Ellisland, and was, when he first knew her, a handsome blooming girl, just bursting into womanhood. She married a wealthy gentleman early in life; but, unfortunately, from some act of indiscretion she fell from "her high estate," and sunk to the lowest depths of poverty and degradation; and is said, on the authority of Mr Chambers, to have been forced to support herself, towards the end of her life, by her labours as a laundress in Maxwelltown.

O LOVELY Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There 's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That 's half so fair as thou art.
The flower it blaws, it fades and fa's,
And art can ne'er renew it;
But worth and truth eternal youth
Will gie to Polly Stewart.

May he whose arms shall fauld thy charms
Possess a leal and true heart;
To him be given to ken the heaven
He grasps in Polly Stewart!
O lovely Polly Stewart!
O charming Polly Stewart!
There 's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
That 's half so sweet as thou art.

TO MARY.

TUNE—"At Setting Day."

COULD aught of song declare my pains,
Could artful numbers move thee,
The Muse should tell, in labour'd strains,
O Mary, how I love thee!
They who but feign a wounded heart
May teach the lyre to languish;
But what avails the pride of art,
When wastes the soul with anguish?

Then let the sudden bursting sigh
The heart-felt pang discover;
And in the keen, yet tender, eye,
Oh, read th' imploring lover.
For well I know thy gentle mind
Disdains art's gay disguising;
Beyond what fancy e'er refined,
The voice of nature prizing.

WAE IS MY HEART.

TUNE—"Wae is my heart."

WAE is my heart, and the tear's in my ee;
Lang, lang, joy 's been a stranger to me:
Forsaken and friendless, my burden I bear,
And the sweet voice of pity ne'er sounds in my ear.

Love, thou hast pleasures, and deep hae I loved,
Love, thou hast sorrows, and sair hae I proved;
But this bruisèd heart that now bleeds in my breast,
I can feel by its throbbings will soon be at rest.

Oh, if I were, where happy I hae been,
Down by yon stream and yon bonny castle-green;
For there he is wandering, and musing on me,
Wha wad soon dry the tear frae his Phillis's ee.

HERE'S TO THY HEALTH, MY LONNY LASS

TUNE—"Laggan Burn."

HERE 's to thy health, my bonny lass,
Guid night and joy be wi' thee;
I 'll come nae mair to thy bower-door
To tell thee that I lo'e thee

Oh, dinna think, my pretty pink,
But I can live without thee:
I vow and swear I dinna care,
How lang ye look about ye.

Thou 'rt aye sae free informing me
Thou hast nae mind to marry;
I 'll be as free informing thee
Nae time hae I to tarry.
I ken thy friends try ilka means
Frae wedlock to delay thee;
Depending on some higher chance—
But Fortune may betray thee.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
But that does never grieve me;
But I 'm as free as any he,
Sma' siller will relieve me.
I 'll count my health my greatest wealth
Sae lang as I 'll enjoy it:
I 'll fear nae scant, I 'll bode nae want,
As lang 's I get employment.

But far-off fowls hae feathers fair,
And aye until ye try them:
Though they seem fair, still have a care,
They may prove waur than I am.
But at twal at night, when the moon shines bright,
My dear, I 'll come and see thee;
For the man that lo'es his mistress weel,
Nae travel makes him weary.

MY LADY'S GOWN, THERE 'S GAIRS UPON 'T

TUNE—"Gregg's Pipes."

My lady's gown, there 's gairs[1] upon 't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon 't;
But Jenny's jimps[2] and jirkinet,[3]
My lord thinks meikle mair upon 't.

My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane;
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

My lady 's white, my lady 's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassillis' blude;
But her ten-pund lands o' tocher guid
Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

[1] A triangular piece of cloth inserted at the bottom of a robe.
[2] A kind of stays. [3] Bodice

Out o'er yon muir, out o'er yon moss,
Whare gor-cocks through the heather pass,
There wons auld Colin's bonny lass,
A lily in a wilderness.

Sae sweetly move her gentle limbs,
Like music-notes o' lovers' hymns:
The diamond dew in her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

My lady 's dink,[1] my lady 's drest,
The flower and fancy o' the west;
But the lassie that a man lo'es best,
Oh, that 's the lass to mak him blest.

ANNA, THY CHARMS.

TUNE—"Bonny Mary."

ANNA, thy charms my bosom fire,
And waste my soul with care;
But ah! how bootless to admire,
When fated to despair!
Yet in thy presence, lovely fair,
To hope may be forgiven;
For sure 'twere impious to despair,
So much in sight of heaven.

JOCKEY 'S TA'EN THE PARTING KISS.

TUNE—"Bonny Lassie, tak a Man."

JOCKEY 's ta'en the parting kiss,
O'er the mountains he is gane;
And with him is a' my bliss,
Nought but griefs with me remain.
Spare my luve, ye winds that blaw,
Plashy sleets and beating rain!
Spare my luve, thou feathery snaw,
Drifting o'er the frozen plain!

When the shades of evening creep
O'er the day's fair gladsome ee,
Sound and safely may he sleep,
Sweetly blithe his waukening be!
He will think on her he loves,
Fondly he 'll repeat her name;
For where'er he distant roves,
Jockey's heart is still at hame.

[1] Neat, trim.

OH, LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS.

TUNE—"Cordwainers' March."

Oh, lay thy loof[1] in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

A slave to love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me meikle wae;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.

There 's mony a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink[2] I hae lo'ed best;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

Oh, lay thy loof in mine, lass
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

OH, MALLY'S MEEK, MALLY'S SWEET.

Cunningham gives the following account of the origin of this song:—"The poet was one day walking along the High Street of Dumfries, when he met a young woman from the country, who, with her shoes and stockings packed carefully up, and her petticoats kilted,

'Which did gently shaw
Her straight bare legs that whiter were than snaw,'

was proceeding towards the Galloway side of the Nith. This sight, by no means so unusual then as now, influenced the Muse of Burns, and the result was this exquisite lyric."

As I was walking up the street,
A barefit maid I chanced to meet;
But oh, the road was very hard
For that fair maiden's tender feet.

Oh, Mally 's meek, Mally 's sweet.
Mally 's modest and discreet,
Mally 's rare, Mally 's fair,
Mally 's every way complete.

It were mair meet that those fine feet
Were weel laced up in silken shoon,
And 'twere more fit that she should sit
Within yon chariot gilt aboon.

---

[1] Palm [2] Short space.

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
Comes trinkling down her swan-like neck;
And her two eyes, like stars in skies,
Would keep a sinking ship frae wreck.

THE BANKS OF CREE.

TUNE—"The Banks of Cree."

Lady Elizabeth Heron having composed an air entitled "The Banks of Cree," in remembrance of a beautiful and romantic stream of that name, "I have written," says the poet, "the following song to it, as her ladyship is a particular friend of mine."

HERE is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village-bell has told the hour—
Oh, what can stay my lovely maid?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
'Tis not the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little faithful mate to cheer—
At once 'tis music, and 'tis love.

And art thou come? and art thou true?
Oh, welcome, dear, to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.

TUNE—"O'er the hills and far away."

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad:
How can I the thought forego,
He 's on the seas to meet the foe?
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love:
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are with him that 's far away.

On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams, and thoughts by day,
Are aye with him that 's far away.

When in summer noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in the scorching sun
My sailor's thundering at his gun:
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!
Fate, do with me what you may—
Spare but him that's far away!

At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power;
As the storms the forest tear,
And thunders rend the howling air,
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray,
For his weal that's far away.

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild War his ravage end,
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet:
Then may Heaven with prosperous gales
Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey—
My dear lad that's far away.

CA' THE YOWES.

This is an improved version, which the poet prepared for his friend Thomson, of a song already given at p. 383.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonny dearie!

Hark the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Cluden's woods amang!
Then a faulding let us gang,
My bonny dearie.

We'll gae down by Cluden side,
Through the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide,
To the moon sae clearly.

Yonder Cluden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou 'rt to love and heaven sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near.
My bonny dearie.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart;
I can die—but canna part—
My bonny dearie!

SHE SAYS SHE LOE'S ME BEST OF A'.

TUNE—"Onagh's Waterfall."

Miss Jean Lorimer, the flaxen-haired Chloris of this and other fine lyrics, has been once or twice alluded to already; but as the poet has celebrated her beauty of person and charms of manner in no less than eleven songs, some of which are amongst the finest he ever wrote; and as her lot in life, for one so beautiful and attractive, was singularly unfortunate, a brief outline of her history will be found interesting—for the leading incidents of which we are indebted to the diligence and research of Mr Robert Chambers. Her father, Mr William Lorimer, was a prosperous farmer at a place called Kemmis Hall, on the banks of the Nith, near Dumfries, and with whom the poet was on terms of the closest intimacy. Here he first saw and admired this charming creature, who, though not yet nineteen, was now in the full bloom of her dazzling beauty, and destined to task his Muse to its highest heaven of invention. She had, of course, no lack of suitors, many of whom were men of worth and honour; but, unfortunately for herself, her choice fell upon a young gentleman of the name of Whelpdale, a native of the county of Cumberland, who had settled as a farmer in the neighbourhood of Moffat, and with whom she eloped one night from her father's house to Gretna Green, where they were married. But, a few short months after this romantic affair, her husband, who was naturally of reckless and extravagant habits, fled from the district to avoid his creditors, leaving his wife to return to her father's without a penny to support her. She did not see him again for twenty-three years! And it was while residing with her parents, in this abandoned condition, that the poet first made her acquaintance, and sang her beauty and her sorrows. A few years after her desertion, however, when the poet's lyre was mute, and the hand that tuned it in her praise was mouldering in the dust, her father met with a series of losses that reduced him to the brink of poverty, and she was forced to accept of a situation as an under governess in a gentleman's family. Having supported herself for many years by her services in this capacity, she one day accidentally heard that her husband was imprisoned at Carlisle for debt, after having wandered about the country for years, and squandered some four or five fortunes that had been left him by different relations. With a woman's yearning for the lover of her youth, she went to see him; but when he was pointed out to her, he was so changed, she scarcely knew him; and it was only when he pronounced her name, that she recognised, in the broken-down and bloated figure before her the gay gallant with whom she had fled from her father's house some twenty years before! After a few visits, as the infatuated man seemed utterly incapable of reforming, she parted with him, never to meet again. Some years afterwards, when friendless and unprotected, she stept from the paths of honour, fell from her respectable position in society, and for a time "had her portion with weeds and outworn faces!" For years after this she is said to have been in a condition little above beggary, leading a kind of wandering life, and occasionally acting as a domestic servant. Ultimately, however, through the exertions of a benevolent gentleman to whom she had disclosed her history, she was rescued from this wretched state, and

became housekeeper to a gentleman residing in Newington, Edinburgh, where she remained for some years. But having at last been seized with consumption, which compelled her to leave her situation, she retired to an obscure abode in Middleton's Entry, Potterrow; and after lingering there for some time in loneliness and suffering, supported by the charity of strangers, she died in September 1831, and was buried in Newington churchyard.

Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughing een o' bonny blue.
Her smiling sae wiling,
Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto these rosy lips to grow!
Such was my Chloris' bonny face,
When first her bonny face I saw;
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Like harmony her motion;
Her pretty ankle is a spy,
Betraying fair proportion,
Wad mak a saint forget the sky.
Sae warming, sae charming,
Her faultless form and gracefu' air;
Ilk feature – auld Nature
Declared that she could do nae mair.
Hers are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering beauty's sovereign law:
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best o' a'.

Let others love the city,
And gaudy show at sunny noon;
Gie me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon;
Fair beaming and streaming,
Her silver light the boughs amang;
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang:
There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o' truth and love,
And say thou lo'est me best of a'?

THE LOVER'S MORNING SALUTE TO HIS MISTRESS.

Tune—"Deil tak the wars."

"Having been out in the country dining with a friend," (Mr Lorimer of Kemmis Hall,) says the poet in a letter to Thomson, "I met with a lady, [Mrs Whelpdale—'Chloris,'] and as usual got into song, and on returning home composed the following:"—

SLEEP'ST thou, or wakest thou, fairest creature?
Rosy Morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud which nature
Waters wi' the tears o' joy:
Now through the leafy woods,
And by the reeking floods,
Wild nature's tenants, freely, gladly, stray,
The lintwhite in his bower
Chants o'er the breathing flower; *
The laverock to the sky
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.

Phœbus, gilding the brow o' morning,
Banishes ilk darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When absent frae my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With startless gloom o'ercast my sullen sky;
But when, in beauty's light,
She meets my ravish'd sight,
When through my very heart
Her beaming glories dart—
'Tis then I wake to life, to light, and joy.†

CHLORIS.

Regarding the following lines, the poet says:—"Having been on a visit the other day to my fair Chloris—that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration—she suggested an idea, which, on my return home, I wrought into the following song:"—

MY Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

---

* VARIATION.—"Now to the streaming fountain,
Or up the heathy mountain,
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers
His lay the linnet pours;
The laverock to the sky," &c.

† VAR.—"When frae my Chloris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
Then night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky;
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of beauty's light:
When through my very heart
Her beaming glories dart,
'Tis then, 'tis then I wake to life and joy."

The laverock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings;
For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lighted ha':
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blithe, in the birken shaw.[1]

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours,
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

The shepherd in the flowery glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo;
The courtier tells a finer tale—
But is his heart as true?

These wild-wood flowers I 've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine;
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tisna love like mine.

TO CHLORIS.

The following lines, says the poet, were "written on the blank leaf of a copy of the last edition of my poems, and presented to the lady whom, with the most ardent sentiments of real friendship, I have so often sung under the name of Chloris:"—

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralising Muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms,)
To join the friendly few;

Since thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lower;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower;)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store—
The comforts of the mind!

---

[1] Birch wood.

Thine is the self-approving glow
On conscious honour's part;
And—dearest gift of Heaven below—
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refined of sense and taste,
With every Muse to rove:
And doubly were the poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

AH, CHLORIS!

TUNE—"Major Graham."

This is another of those beautiful lyrics, the fruit of the poet's acquaintance with the charming Chloris—the lightning of whose eye, to use his own words, was the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

AH, Chloris! since it mayna be
That thou of love wilt hear;
If from the lover thou maun flee,
Yet let the friend be dear.

Although I love my Chloris mair
Than ever tongue could tell;
My passion I will ne'er declare,
I'll say, I wish thee well.

Though a' my daily care thou art,
And a' my nightly dream,
I'll hide the struggle in my heart,
And say it is esteem.

SAW YE MY PHELY?

TUNE—"When she cam ben she bobbit."

OH, saw ye my dear, my Phely?
Oh, saw ye my dear, my Phely?
She 's down i' the grove, she 's wi' a new love,
She winna come hame to her Willy.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
She lets thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee, her Willy.

Oh, had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
Oh, had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

HOW LONG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT!

To a Gaelic Air.

How long and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie!
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.
I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.

When I think on the happy days
I spent wi' you, my dearie,
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie?[1]
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie?

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary!
It wasna sae ye glinted[2] by
When I was wi' my dearie.
It wasna sae ye glinted by
When I was wi' my dearie.

IMPROVED VERSION.

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

How long and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie!
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.

For oh! her lanely nights are lang,
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That 's absent frae her dearie.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie;
And now what seas between us roar—
How can I be but eerie?

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours!
The joyless day how dreary!
It wasna sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.

[1] Lonely. [2] Glided.

LET NOT WOMAN E'ER COMPLAIN.

TUNE—"Duncan Gray."

"I have been at 'Duncan Gray,'" says the poet to Thomson, "to dress it into English; but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance:"—

LET not woman e'er complain
Of inconstancy in love;
Let not woman e'er complain
Fickle man is apt to rove:
Look abroad through nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change;
Ladies, would it not be strange,
Man should then a monster prove?

Mark the winds, and mark the skies;
Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow:
Sun and moon but set to rise,
Round and round the seasons go:
Why then ask of silly man
To oppose great Nature's plan?
We'll be constant while we can—
You can be no more, you know.

THE CHARMING MONTH OF MAY.

The poet having given the following English dress to an old Scotch ditty, says, in transmitting it to Thomson:—"You may think meanly of this; but if you saw the bombast of the original you would be surprised that I had made so much of it."

IT was the charming month of May,
When all the flowers were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;
From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flowery mead she goes,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people you might see,
Perch'd all around, on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody,
They hail the charming Chloe;
Till painting gay the eastern skies,
The glorious sun began to rise,
Out-rivall'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

TUNE—"Rothemurche's Rant."

'This piece," says the poet, "has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded."

Now nature cleeds[1] the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
Oh, wilt thou share its joy wi' me,
And say thou 'lt be my dearie, O?

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonny lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent[2] the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

And when the welcome simmer-shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We 'll to the breathing woodbine bower
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's[3] hameward way;
Through yellow waving fields we 'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest;
Enclaspèd to my faithfu' breast,
I 'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.

FAREWELL, THOU STREAM.

TUNE—"Nancy's to the greenwood gane."

This song appears to be an improved version of the one entitled, "The last time I came o'er the moor," (p. 428,) with the substitution of the name Eliza for that of Maria. This change probably arose from the poet's quarrel with Mrs Riddel having rendered her name distasteful to him. See the introduction to the song entitled, "Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?" in p. 461.

FAREWELL, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
O Memory! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish;
To feel a fire in every vein,
Nor dare disclose my anguish.

---

[1] Clothes. [2] Tend. [3] Reaper's

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover;
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst, relieve me;
But oh, Eliza, hear one prayer—
For pity's sake forgive me!

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it enslaved me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
'Till fears no more had saved me:
The unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming ruin.

O PHILLY, HAPPY BE THAT DAY.

TUNE—"The Sow's Tail."

HE.

O PHILLY, happy be that day,
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willy, aye I bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,
Whilst thou didst pledge the Powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear,
And charming is my Philly.

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows.
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er so welcome to my eye
As is a sight o' Philly.

SHE.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
Though wafting o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring
As meeting o' my Willy.

HE.

The bee that through the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower,
Compared wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weet
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy.

HE.

Let Fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

What's a' the joys that gowd can gie?
I carena wealth a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

CONTENTED WI' LITTLE.

TUNE—"Lumps o' Pudding."

This song is entitled to more than ordinary attention, as it appears the poet meant it for a personal sketch; for, in a letter to Thomson, thanking him for the present of a picture of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," by David Allan, the leading painter of the day, he says:—"Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present. . . . I have some thoughts of suggesting to you to prefix a vignette of me to my song, 'Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,' in order that the portrait of my face, and *the picture of my mind*, may go down the stream of time together."

CONTENTED wi' little, and cantie[1] wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather[2] wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp,[3] as they 're creeping alang,
Wi' a cog o' guid swats,[4] and an auld Scottish sang.

---

[1] Happy. [2] Meet. [3] Whack. [4] Flagon of ale

I whiles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a sodger, and life is a faught;
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

A towmond[1] o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' guid-fellowship sowthers[2] it a':
When at the blithe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind Chance, let her snapper and stoyte[3] on her way;
Be 't to me, be 't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:[4]
Come ease or come travail; come pleasure or pain;
My warst word is,—"Welcome, and welcome again!"

CANST THOU LEAVE ME THUS, MY KATY?

TUNE—"Roy's Wife."

This song, which the poet says he composed in two or three turns across his little room, was meant as a representation of the kindly feelings which he now once more began to entertain for his former beautiful and fascinating friend, Mrs Riddel of Woodley Park. Having been a frequent and welcome guest at the house of this kind and accomplished lady, whom he passionately admired, (see the song, "The last time I came o'er the moor," p. 428,) he is said, on one occasion, while under the influence of the wine he had taken at table, and the alluring charms of his fair hostess's conversation and manner, to have so far forgot himself as to attempt to kiss her—an indignity, however, which she punished by withdrawing her friendship. During the continuance of this coldness, which lasted for nearly two years, he weakly gave vent to his wrath and wounded pride in two or three lampoons and other satirical effusions; but ultimately a kindlier feeling took possession of him, under the influence of which he composed this song, and sent it to the lady as a kind of peace-offering. To her honour be it said, she not only had the magnanimity to forgive him, but, in order to soothe his ruffled feelings, and help to heal the breach that kept them separate, she replied to his song in a similar strain of poetic licence.* The poet, it will be observed, with the usual freedom

[1] Twelvemonth. [2] Solders. [3] Stagger and stumble. [4] Slut go.

* The following are the pieces which Mrs Riddel sent to the poet in reply to his song:—

TUNE—"Roy's Wife."

"TELL me that thou yet art true,
And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven;
And when this heart proves fause to thee,
Yon sun shall cease its course in heaven.

"Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay, my Willie—yet believe me.
For, ah! thou know'st na every pang
Wad wring my bosom, shouldst thou leave me.

"But to think I was betray'd,
That falsehood e'er our loves should sunder!
To take the floweret to my breast,
And find the guilefu' serpent under

of the sons of Apollo, addresses her as a mistress, and in that character she replies to him. It is gratifying to know that they ultimately became thoroughly reconciled, and after his untimely and lamented death, he had no warmer eulogist than Maria Riddel.

Is this thy plighted, fond reward,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katy?
Is this thy faithful swain's regard—
An aching, broken heart, my Katy?

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou knowest my aching heart—
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katy!
Thou mayst find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy!

"Could I hope thou'dst ne'er deceive,
Celestial pleasures might I choose 'em,
I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
That heaven I'd find within thy bosom

"Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
For ah! thou know'st na every pang
Wad wring my bosom, shouldst thou leave me

'To thee, loved Nith, thy gladsome plains,
Where late with careless thought I ranged,
Though prest with care, and sunk in woe,
To thee I bring a heart unchanged.
I love thee, Nith, thy banks and braes,
Though Memory there my bosom tear,
For there he roved that broke my heart,
Yet to that heart, ah, still how dear!

"And now your banks and bonny braes
But waken sad remembrance' smart;
The very shades I held most dear
Now strike fresh anguish to my heart.
Deserted bower! where are they now—
Ah! where the garlands that I wove
With faithful care, each morn to deck
The altars of ungrateful love?

"The flowers of spring, how gay they bloom'd
When last with him I wander'd here!
The flowers of spring are pass'd away
For wintry horrors, dark and drear.
Yon osier'd stream, by whose lone banks
My songs have lull'd him oft to rest,
Is now in icy fetters lock'd—
Cold as my false love's frozen breast."

WHA IS THAT AT MY BOWER-DOOR?

TUNE—"Lass, an I come near thee"

The following quaint ditty, it appears, was suggested to the poet by an old song in Ramsay's "Tea-Table Miscellany," entitled, "The Auld Man's Address to the Widow:"—

WHA is that at my bower-door?
Oh, wha is it but Findlay?
Then gae yere gate,[1] ye'se nae be here!—
Indeed, maun I, quo' Findlay.
What mak ye sae like a thief?
Oh, come and see, quo' Findlay;
Before the morn ye 'll work mischief—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Gif[2] I rise and let you in,—
Let me in, quo' Findlay;
Ye 'll keep me waukin wi' your din—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
In my bower if ye should stay,—
Let me stay, quo' Findlay;
I fear ye 'll bide[3] till break o' day—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Here this night if ye remain,—
I 'll remain, quo' Findlay;
I dread ye 'll ken the gate again;—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
What may pass within this bower,
Let it pass, quo' Findlay;
Ye maun conceal till your last hour;—
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

THE CARDIN' O 'T.

TUNE—"Salt-fish and Dumplings."

I COFT[4] a stane o' haslock[5] woo,
To mak a coat to Johnny o 't;
For Johnny is my only jo,
I love him best of ony yet.

The cardin' o 't, the spinnin' o 't,
The warpin' o 't, the winnin' o 't,
When ilka ell cost me a groat,
The tailor staw[6] the linin' o 't.

---

[1] Way. [2] If. [3] Remain [4] Bought
[5] Hause-lock, the wool on the throat—the finest of the fleece. [6] Stole

For though his locks be lyart gray,
And though his brow be held aboon,
Yet I hae seen him on a day
The pride of a' the parishen.

THE PIPER.

A FRAGMENT.

THERE came a piper out o' Fife,
I watna what they ca'd him;
He play'd our cousin Kate a spring
When fient a body bade him;
And aye the mair he hotch'd and blew,
The mair that she forbade him.

JENNY M'CRAW.

A FRAGMENT.

JENNY M'CRAW, she has ta'en to the heather,
Say, was it the Covenant carried her thither;
Jenny M'Craw to the mountains is gane,
Their leagues and their covenants a' she has ta'en
My head and my heart now, quo' she, are at rest,
And as for the lave, let the deil do his best.

THE LAST BRAW BRIDAL.

A FRAGMENT.

THE last braw bridal that I was at,
'Twas on a Hallowmas day,
And there was routh[1] o' drink and fun,
And mickle mirth and play.
The bells they rang, and the carlines[2] sang,
And the dames danced in the ha';
The bride went to bed wi' the silly bridegroom,
In the midst o' her kimmers[3] a'.

[1] Plenty. [2] Old women. [3] Women.

LINES ON A MERRY PLOUGHMAN.

As I was a wandering ae morning in spring,
I heard a merry ploughman sae sweetly to sing;
And as he was singin' thae words he did say,
There 's nae life like the ploughman's in the month o' sweet May.

The laverock in the morning she 'll rise frae her nest,
And mount in the air wi' the dew on her breast;
And wi' the merry ploughman she 'll whistle and sing:
And at night she 'll return to her nest back again.

THE WINTER OF LIFE.

TUNE—"Gil Morice."

BUT lately seen in gladsome green,
The woods rejoiced the day;
Through gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled
On winter blasts awa'!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow,[1] nae kindly thowe,[2]
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild,[3] but[4] buss or bield,[5]
Sinks in Time's wintry rage.
Oh! age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why comest thou not again!

I 'LL AYE CA' IN BY YON TOWN

TUNE—"I 'll gae nae mair to yon town."

I 'LL aye ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green, again;
I 'll aye ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonny Jean again.

There 's nane sall ken, there 's nane sall guess,
What brings me back the gate again;
But she, my fairest, faithfu' lass,
And stowlins[6] we sall meet again.

---

1 Head. 2 Thaw. 3 Aged trunk
4 Without. 5 Shelter. 6 ecretly.

She 'll wander by the aiken tree,
When trystin'-time draws near again;
And when her lovely form I see,
Oh, haith, she 's doubly dear again!

I 'll aye ca' in by yon town,
And by yon garden green, again;
I 'll aye ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonny Jean again.

THE GOWDEN LOCKS OF ANNA.

TUNE—"Banks of Banna."

"A Dumfries maiden," says Cunningham, "with a light foot and a merry eye, was the heroine of this clever song. Burns thought so well of it himself that he recommended it to Thomson; but the latter—aware, perhaps, of the free character of her of the gowden locks, excluded it, though pressed to publish it by the poet. Irritated, perhaps, at Thomson's refusal, he wrote the additional stanza, by way of postscript, in defiance of his colder-blooded critic."

YESTREEN I had a pint o' wine,
A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine
The gowden locks of Anna.
The hungry Jew in wilderness,
Rejoicing o'er his manna,
Was naething to my hinny bliss
Upon the lips of Anna.

Ye monarchs tak the east and west,
Frae Indus to Savannah!
Gie me within my straining grasp
The melting form of Anna.
There I 'll despise imperial charms,
An empress or sultana,
While dying raptures in her arms
I give and take with Anna!

Awa', thou flaunting god o' day!
Awa', thou pale Diana!
Ilk star gae hide thy twinkling ray,
When I 'm to meet my Anna.
Come, in thy raven plumage, Night!
Sun, moon, and stars withdrawn a';
And bring an angel pen to write
My transports wi' my Anna!

POSTSCRIPT.

The kirk and state may join, and tell
To do such things I maunna:
The kirk and state may gae to hell,
And I 'll gae to my Anna.

She is the sunshine o' my ee,—
To live but[1] her I canna;
Had I on earth but wishes three,
The first should be my Anna.

HAD I THE WYTE.

TUNE—"Had I the wyte?—she bade me."

HAD I the wyte,[2] had I the wyte,
Had I the wyte?—she bade me;
She watch'd me by the hie-gate side,
And up the loan she shaw'd me;
And when I wadna venture in,
A coward loon she ca'd me;
Had kirk and state been in the gate,
I lighted when she bade me.

Sae craftilie she took me ben,[3]
And bade me make nae clatter;
"For our ramgunshoch, glum[4] guidman
Is o'er ayont the water:"
Whae'er shall say I wanted grace,
When I did kiss and dawt[5] her,
Let him be planted in my place,
Syne say I was a fautor.

Could I for shame, could I for shame,
Could I for shame refused her?
And wadna manhood been to blame
Had I unkindly used her?
He claw'd her wi' the ripplin-kame,
And blae and bluidy bruised her;
When sic a husband was frae hame,
What wife but wad excused her?

I dighted[6] aye her een sae blue,
And bann'd the cruel randy;[7]
And weel I wat her willing mou'
Was e'en like sugar-candy.
At gloamin'-shot it was, I trow,
I lighted on the Monday;
But I cam through the Tysday's dew,
To wanton Willie's brandy.

---

1 Without 2 Blame. 3 In. 4 Rugged, coarse
5 Fondle. 6 Wiped. 7 Scold.

CALEDONIA.

TUNE—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

THERE was once a day—but old Time then was young—
That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung,
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?)
From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she would:
Her heavenly relations there fixèd her reign,
And pledged their their godheads to warrant it good.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred the heroine grew:
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore,
"Whoe'er shall provoke thee th' encounter shall rue!"
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport,
To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn;
But chiefly the woods were her favourite resort,
Her darling amusement the hounds and the horn.

Long quiet she reign'd; till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand:
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd the land:
Their pounces were murder, and terror their cry,
They 'd conquer'd and ruin'd a world beside;
She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly—
The daring invaders they fled or they died.

The fell harpy-raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore!
The wild Scandinavian boar issued forth
To wanton in carnage, and wallow in gore;
O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
No arts could appease them, no arms could repel,
But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Largs well can witness, and Loncartie tell.

The Cameleon-savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion, and strife;
Provoked beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his life:
The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oft prowling, ensanguined the Tweed's silver flood
But, taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learn'd to fear in his own native wood.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd, and free,
Her bright course of glory for ever shall run:
For brave Caledonia immortal must be;
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun:

Rectangle-triangle, the figure we 'll choose,
The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base;
But brave Caledonia 's the hypothenuse;
Then, ergo, she 'll match them, and match them always

THE FAREWELL.

TUNE—"It was a' for our rightfu' king."

IT was a' for our rightfu' king
We left fair Scotland's strand;
It was a' for our rightfu' king
We e'er saw Irish land, my dear,
We e'er saw Irish land.

Now a' is done that men can do,
And a' is done in vain;
My love and native land farewell,
For I maun cross the main, my dear,
For I maun cross the main.

He turn'd him right, and round about,
Upon the Irish shore;
And gae his bridle-reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore, my dear,
With adieu for evermore.

The sodger frae the wars returns,
The sailor frae the main;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again, my dear,
Never to meet again.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a' folk bound to sleep;
I think on him that 's far awa',
The lee-lang night, and weep, my dear,
The lee-lang night, and weep.

OH, STEER HER UP.

TUNE—"Oh, steer her up and haud her gaun."

OH, steer[1] her up and haud her gaun—
Her mither 's at the mill, jo;
And gin she winna tak a man,
E'en let her tak her will, jo:

---

[1] Stir

First shore[1] her wi' a kindly kiss,
And ca' anither gill, jo;
And gin she tak the thing amiss,
E'en let her flyte[2] her till, jo.

Oh, steer her up, and be na blate,[3]
And gin she tak it ill, jo,
Then lea'e the lassie till her fate,
And time nae langer spill, jo:
Ne'er break your heart for ae rebute,[4]
But think upon it still, jo;
That gin the lassie winna do't,
Ye 'll fin' anither will, jo.

BONNY PEG-A-RAMSAY.

TUNE—"Cauld is the e'enin blast."

CAULD is the e'enin' blast
O' Boreas o'er the pool;
And dawin' it is dreary
When birks are bare at Yule.

Oh, cauld blaws the e'enin' blast
When bitter bites the frost,
And in the mirk and dreary drift
The hills and glens are lost.

Ne'er sae murky blew the night
That drifted o'er the hill,
But bonny Peg-a-Ramsay
Gat grist to her mill.

HEE BALOU!

TUNE—"The Highland Balou."

Concerning this song, Cromek says—"The time when the moss-troopers and cattle-drivers on the Borders began their nightly depredations was the first Michaelmas moon. Cattle-stealing formerly was a mere foraging expedition and it has been remarked that many of the best families in the north car trace their descent from the daring sons of the mountains. The produce (by way of dowry to a laird's daughter) of a Michaelmas moon is proverbial; and by the aid of Lochiel's lanthorn (the moon) these exploits were the most desirable things imaginable. In the 'Hee Balou' we see one of those heroes in the cradle."

HEE balou![5] my sweet wee Donald,
Picture o' the great Clanronald;

---

[1] Try. [2] Scold. [3] Bashful.
[4] Rebuke. [5] A cradle-lullaby phrase used by nurses.

Brawlie kens our wanton chief
Wha got my young Highland thief.

Leeze me on thy bonny craigie,
An thou live, thou 'lt steal a naigie:
Travel the country through and through,
And bring hame a Carlisle cow.

Through the Lawlands, o'er the Border,
Weel, my baby, may thou furder:[1]
Herry[2] the louns o' the laigh countrie,
Syne to the Highlands, hame to me.

HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.

TUNE—"The Job of Journeywork."

ALTHOUGH my back be at the wa',
And though he be the fautor;
Although my back be at the wa',
Yet, here's his health in water!

O! wae gae by his wanton sides,
Sae brawlie's he could flatter;
Till for his sake I 'm slighted sair,
And dree[3] the kintra clatter.[4]

But though my back be at the wa',
And though he be the fautor;
But though my back be at the wa',
Yet, here's his health in water!

AMANG THE TREES, WHERE HUMMING BEES.

TUNE—"The king of France, he rode a race."

AMANG the trees, where humming bees
At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her pipe was singing, O;
'Twas pibroch, sang, strathspey, or reels,
She dirl'd them aff fu' clearly, O,
When there cam a yell o' foreign squeels,
That dang her tapsalteerie,[5] O.

Their capon craws, and queer ha ha's,
They made our lugs[6] grow eerie,[7] O;

---

[1] Prosper. [2] Plunder. [3] Bear. [4] Country talk.
[5] Topsy-turvy [6] Ears. [7] Weary.

The hungry bike[1] did scrape and pike,[2]
Till we were wae and weary, O;
But a royal ghaist,[3] wha ance was cased
A prisoner aughteen year awa',
He fired a fiddler in the north
That dang them tapsalteerie, O

CASSILLIS' BANKS.

TUNE—Unknown.

Now bank and brae are claithed in green,
And scatter'd cowslips sweetly spring:
By Girvan's fairy-haunted stream
The birdies flit on wanton wing.
To Cassillis' banks, when e'ening fa's,
There, wi' my Mary, let me flee,
There catch her ilka glance of love,
The bonny blink o' Mary's ee!

The chield wha boasts o' warld's walth
Is aften laird o' meikle care;
But Mary, she is a' mine ain—
Ah! fortune canna gie me mair!
Then let me range by Cassillis' banks.
Wi' her, the lassie dear to me,
And catch her ilka glance o' love,
The bonny blink o' Mary's ee!

BANNOCKS O' BARLEY.

TUNE—"The Killogie."

BANNOCKS o' bear-meal,
Bannocks o' barley;
Here 's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley!
Wha in a brulzie,[4]
Will first cry a parley?
Never the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley!

Bannocks o' bear-meal,
Bannocks o' barley;
Here 's to the Highlandman's
Bannocks o' barley!

---

[1] Band [2] Pick [3] Ghost. [4] Broil.

Wha, in his wae-days,
Were loyal to Charlie?
Wha but the lads wi'
The bannocks o' barley?

SAE FAR AWA'.

TUNE—"Dalkeith Maiden Bridge."

OH, sad and heavy should I part,
But for her sake sae far awa';
Unknowing what my way may thwart,
My native land, sae far awa'.
Thou that of a' things Maker art,
That form'd this fair sae far awa',
Gie body strength, then I'll ne'er start
At this, my way, sae far awa'.

How true is love to pure desert,
So love to her sae far awa':
And nocht can heal my bosom's smart
While, oh! she is sae far awa'.
Nane other love, nane other dart,
I feel but hers, sae far awa';
But fairer never touch'd a heart
Than hers, the fair, sae far awa'.

HER FLOWING LOCKS.

TUNE—Unknown.

This small piece is said to have been an extemporaneous effusion on a young lady of great beauty whom the poet met one day on the streets of Mauchline. It was found among his MSS., and first printed by Cromek.

HER flowing locks, the raven's wing,
Adown her neck and bosom hing;
How sweet unto that breast to cling,
And round that neck entwine her!

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,
Oh, what a feast her bonny mou'!
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,
A crimson still diviner.

THE HIGHLAND LADDIE.

TUNE—"If thou'lt play me fair play."

This song was composed on the basis of some Jacobite verses, entitled, "The Highland Lad and the Lowland Lassie."

THE bonniest lad that e'er I saw,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
Wore a plaid, and was fu' braw,
Bonny Highland laddie.
On his head a bonnet blue,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
His royal heart was firm and true,
Bonny Highland laddie.

Trumpets sound, and cannons roar,
Bonny lassie, Lowland lassie;
And a' the hills wi' echoes roar,
Bonny Lowland lassie.
Glory, honour, now invite,
Bonny lassie, Lowland lassie,
For freedom and my king to fight,
Bonny Lowland lassie.

The sun a backward course shall take,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie,
Ere aught thy manly courage shake,
Bonny Highland laddie.
Go! for yoursel procure renown,
Bonny laddie, Highland laddie;
And for your lawful king his crown,
Bonny Highland laddie.

THE LASS THAT MADE THE BED TO ME.

TUNE—"The lass that made the bed to me."

The poet, in his notes to the *Museum*, says regarding this song:—"'The bonny lass that made the bed to me' was composed on an amour of Charles II., when skulking in the north, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the house of Port Letham, who was the lass that made the bed to him!"

WHEN Januar' wind was blawing cauld,
As to the north I took my way,
The mirksome[1] night did me enfauld,
I knew na where to lodge till day.

By my good luck a maid I met,
Just in the middle o' my care;
And kindly she did me invite
To walk into a chamber fair.

I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And thank'd her for her courtesie;
I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And bade her make a bed for me.

[1] Darksome.

She made the bed baith large and wide,
Wi' twa white hands she spread it down,
She put the cup to her rosy lips,
And drank, "Young man, now sleep ye soun'."

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
And frae my chamber went wi' speed;
But I call'd her quickly back again,
To lay some mair below my head.

A cod* she laid below my head
And servèd me wi' due respect;
And, to salute her wi' a kiss,
I put my arms about her neck.

"Haud off your hands, young man," she says,
"And dinna sae uncivil be:
Gif ye hae ony love for me,
Oh, wrang na my virginitie!"

Her hair was like the links o' gowd,
Her teeth were like the ivorie;
Her cheeks like lilies dipt in wine,
The lass that made the bed to me.

Her bosom was the driven snaw,
Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see;
Her limbs the polish'd marble stane,
The lass that made the bed to me.

I kiss'd her owre and owre again,
And aye she wist na what to say;
I laid her between me and the wa'—
The lassie thought na lang till day.

Upon the morrow, when we rose,
I thank'd her for her courtesie;
But aye she blush'd, and aye she sigh'd,
And said, "Alas! ye 've ruin'd me."

I clasp'd her waist, and kiss'd her syne,
While the tear stood twinkling in her ee:
I said, "My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye aye shall mak the bed to me."

She took her mither's Holland sheets,
And made them a' in sarks to me:
Blithe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.

The bonny lass made the bed to me,
The braw lass made the bed to me;
I'll ne'er forget, till the day I die,
The lass that made the bed to me!

* Pillow

THE LASS OF ECCLEFECHAN.

TUNE—"Jacky Latin."

GAT ye me, oh, gat ye me,
Oh, gat ye me wi' naething?
Rock and reel, and spinnin' wheel,
A mickle quarter basin.
Bye attour,[1] my gutcher[2] has
A heigh house and a laigh ane,
A' forbye my bonny sel,
The toss of Ecclefechan.

Oh, haud your tongue now, Luckie Laing,
Oh, haud your tongue and jauner;[3]
I held the gate till you I met,
Syne I began to wander:
I tint[4] my whistle and my sang,
I tint my peace and pleasure;
But your green graff[5] now, Luckie Laing,
Wad airt[6] me to my treasure.

THE COOPER O' CUDDIE.

TUNE—"Bob at the Bowster."

THE cooper o' Cuddie cam here awa';
He ca'd the girrs[7] out owre us a'—
And our guidwife has gotten a ca'
That anger'd the silly guidman, O.

We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
Behind the door, behind the door,
We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
And cover him under a mawn,[8] O.

He sought them out, he sought them in,
Wi', Deil hae her! and, Deil hae him!
But the body he was sae doited[9] and blin',
He wistna where he was gaun, O.

They cooper'd at e'en, they cooper'd at morn,
Till our guidman has gotten the scorn;
On ilka brow she 's planted a horn,
And swears that there they shall stan', O.

---

[1] Besides.
[2] Grandsire.
[3] Complaining
[4] Lost.
[5] Grave.
[6] Direct.
[7] Hoops.
[8] Basket
[9] Stupid.

THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT.

Oh! I am come to the low countrie,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Without a penny in my purse
To buy a meal to me.

It wasna sae in the Highland hills,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the country wide
Sae happy was as me.

For then I had a score o' kye,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Feeding on yon hills so high,
And giving milk to me.

And there I had threescore o' yowes,
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Skipping on yon bonny knowes,
And casting woo' to me.

I was the happiest of a' the clan,
Sair, sair may I repine;
For Donald was the brawest man,
And Donald he was mine.

Till Charlie Stuart cam at last,
Sae far to set us free;
My Donald's arm was wanted then
For Scotland and for me.

Their waefu' fate what need I tell?
Right to the wrang did yield:
My Donald and his country fell
Upon Culloden field.

Och-on, O Donald, oh!
Och-on, och-on, och-rie!
Nae woman in the warld wide
Sae wretched now as me.

THERE WAS A BONNY LASS.

There was a bonny lass,
And a bonny, bonny lass,
And she lo'ed her bonny laddie dear;
Till war's loud alarms
Tore her laddie frae her arms,
Wi' many a sigh and a tear.

Over sea, over shore,
Where the cannons loudly roar,
He still was a stranger to fear;
And nocht could him quail,
Or his bosom assail,
But the bonny lass he lo'ed sae dear.

OH, WAT YE WHAT MY MINNIE DID?

Oh, wat ye what my minnie did,
My minnie did, my minnie did,
Oh, wat ye what my minnie did,
On Tysday 'teen to me, jo?
She laid me in a saft bed,
A saft bed, a saft bed,
She laid me in a saft bed,
And bade guid e'en to me, jo.

And wat ye what the parson did,
The parson did, the parson did,
And wat ye what the parson did,
A' for a penny fee, jo?
He loosed on me a lang man,
A mickle man, a strang man,
He loosed on me a lang man,
That might hae worried me, jo.

And I was but a young thing,
A young thing, a young thing,
And I was but a young thing,
Wi' nane to pity me, jo.
I wat the kirk was in the wyte,[1]
In the wyte, in the wyte,
To pit a young thing in a fright,
And loose a man on me, jo.

OH, GUID ALE COMES.

CHORUS.

Oh, guid ale comes, and guid ale goes,
Guid ale gars[2] me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.

I had sax owsen in a pleugh,
They drew a' weel eneugh;

[1] Blame. [2] Makes.

I sell'd them a' just ane by ane;
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.

Guid ale hauds me bare and busy,
Gars me moop[1] wi' the servant hizzie,[2]
Stand i' the stool when I hae done;
Guid ale keeps my heart aboon.

COMING THROUGH THE BRAES O' CUPAR.

Donald Brodie met a lass
Coming o'er the braes o' Cupar;
Donald, wi' his Highland hand,
Rifled ilka charm about her.

CHORUS.

Coming o'er the braes o' Cupar,
Coming o'er the braes o' Cupar,
Highland Donald met a lass,
And row'd his Highland plaid about her.

Weel I wat she was a quean,
Wad made a body's mouth to water;
Our Mess John, wi' his auld gray pow,[3]
His haly lips wad licket at her.

Off she started in a fright,
And through the braes as she could bicker;[4]
But souple Donald quicker flew,
And in his arms he lock'd her sicker.[5]

GUID E'EN TO YOU, KIMMER.

Tune—"We're a' noddin."

Guid e'en to you, kimmer,[6]
And how do ye do?
Hiccup, quo' kimmer,
The better that I 'm fou.
We're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin,
We're a' noddin at our house at hame.

Kate sits i' the neuk,[7]
Suppin' hen broo;[8]
Deil tak Kate,
An she be na noddin too!

---

[1] Romp. [2] Wench. [3] Head. [4] Run.
[5] Sure. [6] Lass. [7] Corner. [8] Broth

How 's a' wi' you, kimmer,
And how do ye fare?
A pint o' the best o 't,
And twa pints mair.

How 's a' wi' you, kimmer,
And how do ye thrive?
How mony bairns hae ye?
Quo' kimmer, I hae five.

Are they a' Johnny's?
Eh! atweel, na:
Twa o' them were gotten
When Johnny was awa'.

Cats like milk,
And dogs like broo,
Lads like lasses weel,
And lasses lads too.
We 're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin,
We 're a' noddin at our house at hame.

MEG O' THE MILL.

TUNE—"Jackie Hume's Lament."

This second version of "Meg o' the Mill," (p. 427,) prepared by the poet for the *Museum*, was founded on an old ditty, which he altered and amended.

OH, ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
And ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
A braw new naig[1] wi' the tail o' a rottan,
And that's what Meg o' the Mill has gotten.

Oh, ken ye what Meg o' the Mill loe's dearly,
And ken ye what Meg o' the Mill lo'es dearly.
A dram o' guid strunt[2] in a morning early,
And that 's what Meg o' the Mill lo'es dearly.

Oh, ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was married,
And ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was married?
The priest he was oxter'd, the clerk he was carried,
And that 's how Meg o' the Mill was married.

OH, ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was bedded,
And ken ye how Meg o' the Mill was bedded?
The groom gat sae fou,[3] he fell twa-fauld beside it,
And that 's how Meg o' the Mill was bedded.

---

[1] A riding-horse. [2] Whisky. [3] Drunk.

YOUNG JAMIE, PRIDE OF A' THE PLAIN.

TUNE—"The Carlin o' the Glen."

YOUNG Jamie, pride of a' the plain,
Sae gallant and sae gay a swain;
Through a' our lasses he did rove,
And reign'd resistless king of love:
But now, wi' sighs and starting tears,
He strays among the woods and briers,
Or in the glens and rocky caves,
His sad complaining dowie[1] raves:

"I wha sae late did range and rove,
And changed with every moon my love,
I little thought the time was near
Repentance I should buy sae dear:
The slighted maids my torments see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I dree;[2]
While she, my cruel, scornfu' fair,
Forbids me e'er to see her mair!"

COMING THROUGH THE RYE.

TUNE—"Coming through the rye."

COMING through the rye, poor body,
Coming through the rye,
She draiglet[3] a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

O Jenny 's a' wat, poor body,
Jenny 's seldom dry;
She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
Coming through the rye.

Gin[4] a body meet a body
Coming through the rye;
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need a body cry?

Gin a body meet a body
Coming through the glen;
Gin a body kiss a body—
Need the warld ken?

---

[1] Sadly. [2] Suffer. [3] Soiled bespattered. [4] If.

THE CARLES OF DYSART.

TUNE—"Hey, ca' through."

Up wi' the carles[1] o' Dysart
And the lads o' Buckhaven,
And the kimmers[2] o' Largo,
And the lasses o' Leven.

Hey, ca' through, ca'[3] through,
For we hae mickle ado;
Hey, ca' through, ca' through,
For we hae mickle ado.

We hae tales to tell,
And we hae sangs to sing;
We hae pennies to spend,
And we hae pints to bring.

We'll live a' our days,
And them that come behin',
Let them do the like,
And spend the gear they win

IS THERE, FOR HONEST POVERTY.

TUNE—"For a' that and a' that."

Of the following song—one of the most striking and characteristic effusions of his Muse—he says, evidently in a strain of affected depreciation: —"A great critic on songs says that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and is consequently no song, but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme."

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea-stamp,
The man 's the gowd for a' that!

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man 's a man for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that!

---

[1] Men. [2] Women [3] Push.

Ye see yon birkie,* ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
He 's but a coof[1] for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that;
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that!

A king can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man 's aboon his might,
Guid faith he maunna[2] fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
It 's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!

O LASSIE, ART THOU SLEEPING YET?

TUNE—"Let me in this ae night."

This beautiful lyric the poet composed on the model of an older one—the base metal of which, as with a magician's touch, he has transmuted into gold.

O LASSIE, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou waking, I would wit?
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.

Oh, let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
For pity's sake this ae night,
Oh, rise and let me in, jo!

Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks through the driving sleet:
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.

---

[1] Fool. [2] "He maunna fa' that" — he must not try that.

* Primarily, the word signifies a lively, mettlesome young fellow; but here the poet's meaning would be better rendered by the words—a proud, affected person

The bitter blast that round me blaws,
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's:
The cauldness o' thy heart 's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.

HER ANSWER.

Oh, tell na me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain!
Gae back the gate ye cam again,
I winna let ye in, jo.

I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
And ance for a', this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo.

The snellest[1] blast, at mirkest hours,
That round the pathless wanderer pours,
Is nocht to what poor she endures
That 's trusted faithless man, jo.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed;
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weird may be her ain, jo.

The bird that charm'd his summer-day
Is now the cruel fowler's prey;
Let witless, trusting woman say
How aft her fate 's the same, jo.

THE HERON ELECTION BALLADS.

BALLAD I.

Although the three following ballads make no pretension to anything higher than mere electioneering squibs, dashed off in the heat of political excitement to serve certain party purposes, and ought therefore to be judged only by the standard applied to all such ephemeral productions, they are yet in many respects highly characteristic, and worthy of preservation, if for nothing more than the rich vein of biting satire that pervades them. They were written by the poet in support of his friend Mr Heron of Kerroughtree, who contested, in the Whig interest, the election to the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright in February 1795. The Tory, or Government candidate, was a Mr Gordon of Balmaghie, a gentleman of small means and little personal influence, but who was supported by the interest of his uncle, Mr Murray of Broughton, one of the largest landowners in the district, and also by that of the Earl of Galloway.

WHOM will you send to London town,
To Parliament, and a' that?

---

[1] Sharpest.

Or wha in a' the country round
The best deserves to fa' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Through Galloway and a' that;
Where is the laird or belted knight
That best deserves to fa' that?

Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yett,[1]
And wha is 't never saw that?
Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree met,
And has a doubt of a' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
Here 's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent patriot,
The honest man, and a' that.

Though wit and worth in either sex,
St Mary's Isle can shaw that;
Wi' dukes and lords let Selkirk mix,
And weel does Selkirk fa' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here 's Heron yet for a' that!
The independent commoner
Shall be the man for a' that.

But why should we to nobles jouk?[2]
And it 's against the law that;
For why, a lord may be a gouk[3]
Wi' ribbon, star, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here 's Heron yet for a' that!
A lord may be a lousy loun
Wi' ribbon, star, and a' that.

A beardless boy comes o'er the hills
Wi' uncle's purse and a' that;
But we 'll hae ane frae 'mang oursels,
A man we ken, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here 's Heron yet for a' that!
For we 're not to be bought and sold
Like naigs, and nowt,[4] and a' that.

Then let us drink the Stewartry,
Kerroughtree's laird, and a' that,
Our representative to be,
For weel he 's worthy a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Here 's Heron yet for a' that!
A House of Commons such as he,
They would be blest that saw that.

[1] Gate. [2] Bend. [3] Fool. [4] Cattle

BALLAD II.

TUNE—"Fy, let us a' to the bridal."

Fy, let us a' to Kirkcudbright,
For there will be bickering there;
For Murray's light horse are to muster,
And oh, how the heroes will swear!

And there will be Murray,[1] commander,
And Gordon,[2] the battle to win;
Like brothers they 'll stand by each other,
Sae knit in alliance and kin.

And there will be black-nebbit Johnnie [3]
The tongue o' the trump to them a';
An he gets na hell for his haddin'
The deil gets na justice ava';

And there will be Kempleton's birkie,[4]
A boy na sae black at the bane,
But, as for his fine nabob fortune,
We 'll e'en let the subject alane.

And there will be Wigton's new sheriff,[5]
Dame Justice fu' brawlie has sped,
She 's gotten the heart of a Bushby,
But, Lord! what 's become o' the head?

And there will be Cardoness,[6] Esquire,
Sae mighty in Cardoness' eyes,
A wight that will weather damnation,
For the devil the prey will despise.

And there will be Kenmure,[7] sae generous!
Whose honour is proof to the storm;
To save them from stark reprobation,
He lent them his name to the firm.

But we winna mention Redcastle,[8]
The body, e'en let him escape!
He 'd venture the gallows for siller,
An 'twere na the cost o' the rape.

---

[1] Murray of Broughton.
[2] Gordon of Balmaghie.
[3] Mr John Bushby, a sharp-witted lawyer, for whom the poet had no little aversion.
[4] William Bushby of Kempleton, brother of the above, who had made a fortune in India, but which was popularly thought to have originated in some questionable transactions connected with the ruinous affair of the Ayr Bank before he went abroad.
[5] Mr Bushby Maitland, son of John, and recently appointed Sheriff of Wigtonshire.
[6] David Maxwell of Cardoness.
[7] Mr Gordon of Kenmure.
[8] Mr Lawrie of Redcastle

And where is our king's lord-lieutenant.
Sae famed for his gratefu' return?
The billie is getting his questions,
To say in St Stephen's the morn.

And there will be Douglases[1] doughty,
New-christening towns far and near;
Abjuring their democrat doings,
By kissing the —— of a peer.

And there will be lads o' the gospel,
Muirhead,[2] wha's as guid as he's true;
And there will be Buittle's apostle,[3]
Wha's mair o' the black than the blue.

And there will be folk frae St Mary's,
A house o' great merit and note,
The deil ane but honours them highly,—
The deil ane will gie them his vote!

And there will be wealthy young Richard,[4]
Dame Fortune should hing by the neck;
For prodigal, thriftless, bestowing,
His merit had won him respect.

And there will be rich brother nabobs,
Though nabobs, yet men of the first,[5]
And there will be Collieston's[6] whiskers,
And Quintin,[7] o' lads not the warst.

And there will be stamp-office Johnnie,[8]
Tak tent how ye purchase a dram;
And there will be gay Cassencarrie,
And there will be gleg Colonel Tam;[9]

And there will be trusty Kerroughtree,[10]
Whase honour was ever his law,
If the virtues were pack'd in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'.

And strong and respectfu's his backing,
The maist o' the lairds wi' him stand;
Nae gipsy-like nominal barons,
Whase property's paper, but lands.

---

1 Messrs Douglas of Carlinwark gave the name of Castle Douglas to a village which rose in their neighbourhood—now a populous town.
2 Rev. Mr Muirhead, minister of Urr.
3 Rev. George Maxwell, minister of Buittle
4 Richard Oswald of Auchincruive.
5 The Messrs Hannay.
6 Mr Copland of Collieston.
7 Quintin M'Adam of Craigengillan
8 Mr John Syme, distributor of stamps, Dumfries.
9 Colonel Goldie of Goldielea.
10 Mr Heron of Kerroughtree, the Whig candidate.

And can we forget the auld Major,[1]
Wha 'll ne'er be forgot in the Greys,
Our flattery we 'll keep for some ither,
Him only it 's justice to praise.

And there will be maiden Kilkerran,[2]
And also Barskimming's guid knight,[3]
And there will be roaring Birtwhistle,[4]
Wha luckily roars in the right.

And there, frae the Niddisdale border,
Will mingle the Maxwells in droves;
Teugh Johnnie,[5] stanch Geordie,[6] and Walie,[7]
That griens for the fishes and loaves.

And there will be Logan M'Dowall,[8]
Sculduddery and he will be there;
And also the wild Scot o' Galloway,
Sodgering, gunpowder Blair.[9]

Then hey the chaste interest o' Broughton,
And hey for the blessings 'twill bring!
It may send Balmaghie to the Commons,
In Sodom 'twould make him a king;

And hey for the sanctified Murray,[10]
Our land wha wi' chapels has stored;
He founder'd his horse amang harlots,
But gied the auld naig to the Lord

JOHN BUSHBY'S LAMENTATION.

BALLAD III.

Mr Heron having gained the election, after a hard and hotly-contested struggle, the poet raised a song of triumph over his discomfited foes, singling out for special castigation his crafty old opponent, John Bushby, factotum to the Earl of Galloway.

'Twas in the seventeen hundred year
O' Christ, and ninety-five,
That year I was the wae'est man
O' ony man alive.

---

1 Major Heron, brother of the above.
2 Sir Adam Ferguson of Kilkerran
3 Sir William Miller of Barskimming, afterwards a judge, with the title of Lord Glenlee.
4 Mr Birtwhistle of Kircudbright.
5 Mr Maxwell of Terraughty.
6 George Maxwell of Carruchan.
7 Mr Wellwood Maxwell.
8 Captain M'Dowall of Logan.
9 Mr Blair of Dunsky.
10 Mr Murray of Broughton, who had abandoned his wife, and eloped with a lady of rank.

In March, the three-and-twentieth day,
The sun raise clear and bright;
But oh, I was a waefu' man
Ere to-fa' o' the night.

Yerl Galloway lang did rule this land
Wi' equal right and fame,
And thereto was his kinsman join'd,
The Murray's noble name!

Yerl Galloway lang did rule the land,
Made me the judge o' strife;
But now Yerl Galloway's sceptre 's broke
And eke my hangman's knife.

'Twas by the banks o' bonny Dee,
Beside Kirkcudbright towers,
The Stewart and the Murray there
Did muster a' their powers.

The Murray, on the auld gray yaud,[1]
Wi' winged spurs did ride,
That auld gray yaud, yea, Nid'sdale rade,
He staw[2] upon Nidside.

An there had been the yerl himsel,
Oh, there had been nae play;
But Garlies was to London gane,
And sae the kye might stray.

And there was Balmaghie, I ween,
In the front rank he wad shine;
But Balmaghie had better been
Drinking Madeira wine.

Frae the Glenkens came to our aid
A chief o' doughty deed;
In case that worth should wanted be,
O' Kenmure we had need.

And there, sae grave, Squire Cardoness
Look'd on till a' was done;
Sae in the tower o' Cardoness,
A howlet sits at noon.

And there led I the Bushbys a';
My gamesome Billy Will,
And my son Maitland, wise as brave,
My footsteps follow'd still.

The Douglas and the Heron's name,
We set nought to their score:
The Douglas and the Heron's name
Had felt our weight before.

[1] Mare. [2] Stole.

But Douglases o' weight had we,
A pair o' trusty lairds,
For building cot-houses sae famed,
And christening kail-yards.

And by our banners march'd Muirhead,
And Buittle wasna slack;
Whose haly priesthood nane can stain,
For wha can dye the black?

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.

TUNE—"Push about the jorum."

Burns having joined the Dumfries Volunteers when they were formed early in 1795, signalised that patriotic event by the composition of the following ballad, which afterwards became very popular throughout the district. It was first given to the public through the columns of the *Dumfries Journal*, in May of the same year, and did more, says Cunningham, "to right the mind of the rustic part of the population, than all the speeches of Pitt and Dundas, or the chosen Five-and-Forty."

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the louns beware, sir;
There 's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, sir.
The Nith shall rin to Corsincon,
The Criffel sink in Solway,
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!
We 'll ne'er permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally.

Oh, let us not, like snarling curs,
In wrangling be divided;
Till, slap! come in an unco loun,
And wi' a rung[1] decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted!
For never, &c.

The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a clout may fail in 't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loun
Shall ever ca' a nail in 't.
Our fathers' bluid the kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it?
By heavens! the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it!
By heavens, &c.

---

[1] Cudgel.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch, his true-sworn brother,
Wha would set the mob aboon the throne,
May they be damn'd together!
Wha will not sing "God save the King"
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But while we sing "God save the King,"
We'll ne'er forget the People.
But while we sing, &c.

OH, WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOWN?

TUNE—"I'll aye ca' in by yon town."

Miss Lucy Johnston, in celebration of whose beauty and accomplishments the poet wrote this song, was the daughter of Wynne Johnston, Esq., of Hilton. Having married Richard Alexander Oswald of Auchincruive, in the county of Ayr, the poet first met her while residing with her husband in the neighbourhood of Dumfries, and in his character, and out of compliment to him, sought to do her honour. All her beauty and accomplishments, however, could not save her from an untimely and lamented death. Having gone to Lisbon in search of health, she died there of consumption a few years after her marriage.

Now haply down yon gay green shaw
She wanders by yon spreading tree:
How blest ye flowers that round her blaw,
Ye catch the glances o' her ee!

CHORUS.

Oh, wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin' sun upon?
The fairest dame's in yon town,
That e'enin' sun is shining on.

How blest ye birds that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year!
And doubly welcome be the spring,
The season to my Lucy dear.

The sun blinks blithe on yon town,
And on yon bonny braes of Ayr;
But my delight in yon town,
And dearest bliss is Lucy fair.

Without my love, not a' the charms
O' Paradise could yield me joy;
But gie me Lucy in my arms,
And welcome Lapland's dreary sky!

My cave wad be a lover's bower,
Though raging winter rent the air;
And she a lovely little flower,
That I wad tent and shelter there.

Oh, sweet is she in yon town
The sinking sun's gane down upon,
A fairer than's in yon town
His setting beam ne'er shone upon.

If angry fate is sworn my foe,
And suffering I am doom'd to bear,
I careless quit aught else below,
But spare me—spare me, Lucy, dear!

For while life's dearest blood is warm
Ae thought frae her shall ne'er depart,
And she—as fairest is her form!
She has the truest, kindest heart!

Oh, wat ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin' sun upon?
The fairest dame's in yon town
That e'enin' sun is shining on.

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

TUNE—"Where'll bonny Ann lie;" or, "Loch-Eroch Side."

OH, stay, sweet warbling woodlark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray;
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing, fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
Sic notes o' woe could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care,
O' speechless grief and dark despair:
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.

TUNE—"Aye wakin', O."

This and the four following pieces are four of the eleven lyrics for which we are indebted to the beauty and charms of Miss Jean Lorimer, as mentioned at p. 451.

CAN I cease to care?
Can I cease to languish,
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Every hope is fled,
Every fear is terror;
Slumber even I dread,
Every dream is horror.

Hear me, Powers divine!
Oh, in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
But my Chloris spare me!

FORLORN, MY LOVE, NO COMFORT NEAR

TUNE—"Let me in this ae night"

FORLORN, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I most repine, love.

Oh, wert thou, love, but near me;
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love!

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I.
Save in those arms of thine, love.

Cold, alter'd Friendship's cruel part,
To poison Fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.

But dreary though the moments fleet,
Oh, let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.

FRAGMENT—CHLORIS.

TUNE—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

WHY, why tell thy lover,
Bliss he never must enjoy?
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie?

Oh why, while Fancy, raptured, slumbers
Chloris, Chloris all the theme;
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream?

MARK YONDER POMP.

TUNE—"Deil tak the Wars."

MARK yonder pomp of costly fashion,
Round the wealthy, titled bride:
But when compared with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.
What are the showy treasures?
What are the noisy pleasures?
The gay gaudy glare of vanity and art
The polish'd jewel's blaze
May draw the wondering gaze,
And courtly grandeur bright
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart.

But did you see my dearest Chloris
In simplicity's array,
Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day;
Oh then, the heart alarming,
And all resistless charming,
In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown,
Even Avarice would deny
His worshipp'd deity,
And feel through every vein Love's raptures roll.

OH, BONNY WAS YON ROSY BRIER.

OH, bonny was yon rosy br'er,
That blooms sae far frae haunt o man;
And bonny she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin' sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure amang the leaves sae green;
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
Its joys and griefs alike resign.

CALEDONIA.

TUNE - "Humours of Glen."

"The heroine of this song," says Cunningham, "was Mrs Burns, who so charmed the poet by singing it with taste and feeling, that he declared it to be one of his luckiest lyrics."

THEIR groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt their perfume;
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,[1]
Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom:

Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen;
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A-listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

Though rich is the breeze in their gay sunny valleys,
And cauld Caledonia's blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace
What are they?—The haunt o' the tyrant and slave!

The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save Love's willing fetters—the chains o' his Jean.

'TWAS NA HER BONNY BLUE EE.

TUNE—"Laddie, lie near me."

'TWAS na her bonny blue ee was my ruin;
Fair though she be, that was ne'er my undoing:

[1] Fern

'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,
'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stown glance o' kindness.

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me!
But though fell Fortune should fate us to sever,
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest!
And thou'rt the angel that never can alter—
Sooner the sun in his motion would falter.

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS!

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG.

TUNE—"John Anderson, my Jo."

How cruel are the parents
Who riches only prize,
And to the wealthy booby
Poor woman sacrifice!
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife—
To shun a tyrant father's hate,
Become a wretched wife.

The ravening hawk pursuing,
The trembling dove thus flies,
To shun impelling ruin
A while her pinion tries;
Till of escape despairing,
No shelter or retreat,
She trusts the ruthless falconer,
And drops beneath his feet!

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER.

TUNE—"The Lothian Lassie."

LAST May a braw wooer cam down the lang gle:
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe, believe me,
The deuce gae wi'm, to believe me!

He spak o' the darts in my bonny black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked for Jean,
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying!

A weel-stockèd mailen[1]—himsel for the laird—
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or cared,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less—
The deil tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But a' the neist week, as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryst o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there!
I glower'd[2] as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glower'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Lest neebors might say I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd[3] for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin',
And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't[4] feet,
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin', a swearin',
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin'!

He begg'd, for guidsake, I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
Sae e'en to preserve the poor body his life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.

TUNE—"This is no my ain house."

I SEE a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place;
It wants to me the witching grace,
The kind love that 's in her ee.

Oh, this is no my ain lassie,
Fair though the lassie be;
Oh, weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her ee.

---

[1] Farm. [2] Stared. [3] Inquired. [4] Distorted

She 's bonny, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And aye it charms my very saul,
The kind love that 's in her ee.

A thief sae pawkie[1] is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen;
But gleg[2] as light are lovers' een,
When kind love is in the ee.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learnèd clerks;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that 's in her ee.

NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVE IN GREEN.

A SCOTTISH SONG.

This song was written by the poet to soothe the wounded feelings of his friend, Mr Alexander Cunningham, writer to the signet, who, as stated at p. 433, had suffered, and to all appearance deeply, from the heartless conduct of a jilt

Now spring has clad the grove in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers:
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
Oh, why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe?

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And, safe beneath the shady thorn,
Defies the angler's art:
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

The little floweret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now, beneath the withering blast,
My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd laverock, warbling, springs,
And climbs the early sky,

---

[1] Sly. [2] Quick.

Winnowing blithe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reckt I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

Oh, had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagued my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whase doom is, "Hope nae mair,"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whase bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

THE DEAN OF FACULTY.

A BALLAD.

TUNE—"The Dragon of Wantley."

In 1795, a season of great national suffering had given rise to a spirit of discontent, which manifested itself in public meetings, mobbings, and other unmistakable indications of a period of fierce political excitement. Amongst the many gatherings of the time, one of the most important was held at Edinburgh, at which the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, presided. But the Tory members of the Scottish bar, considering their chief, while thus engaged, as "agitating the giddy and ignorant multitude, and cherishing such humours and dispositions as directly tended to overturn the laws," were mortally offended, and determined at the next election to the deanship to oppose his return. Accordingly, on the 12th of January 1796, Mr Erskine, although universally popular with all parties, and one of the ablest men at the Scottish bar, was rejected by a majority of 123—38 only having voted for him—and Mr Dundas of Arniston, then Lord Advocate, elected in his stead. On this subject, therefore, and out of feelings of regard for his old friend and patron, Erskine, the poet composed the following satirical ballad. The "pious Bob" of this piece was the son of the Lord President Dundas, who took no notice of a certain elegy which the poet had composed and sent to him on his father's death, as mentioned at p. 153.

DIRE was the hate at old Harlaw,
That Scot to Scot did carry;
And dire the discord Langside saw
For beauteous, hapless Mary:
But Scot with Scot ne'er met so hot,
Or were more in fury seen, sir,
Than 'twixt Hal* and Bob † for the famous job—
Who should be Faculty's Dean, sir.

This Hal for genius, wit, and lore,
Among the first was number'd;

* The Hon. Henry Erskine.
† Robert Dundas, Esq., of Arniston.

But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store,
Commandment tenth remember'd.
Yet simple Bob the victory got,
And won his heart's desire;
Which shows that Heaven can boil the pot,
Though the devil —— in the fire.

Squire Hal, besides, had in this case
Pretensions rather brassy,
For talents to deserve a place
Are qualifications saucy;
So their worships of the Faculty,
Quite sick of merit's rudeness,
Chose one who should owe it all, d'ye see,
To their gratis grace and goodness.

As once on Pisgah purged was the sight
Of a son of Circumcision,
So may be, on this Pisgah height,
Bob's purblind, mental vision:
Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet
Till for eloquence you hail him,
And swear he has the Angel met
That met the Ass of Balaam.

In your heretic sins may ye live and die,
Ye heretic eight-and-thirty!
But accept, ye sublime Majority,
My congratulations hearty.
With your Honours and a certain King,
In your servants this is striking—
The more incapacity they bring,
The more they're to your liking.

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

Tune—"Balinamona Ora."

Awa' wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms;
Oh, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
Oh, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher;
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
The nice yellow guineas for me.

Your beauty's a flower in the morning that blows
And withers the faster the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonny green knowes,
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonny white yowes.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest;
The brightest o' beauty may cloy when possest;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest,
The langer ye hae them the mair they 're carest.

JESSY.

TUNE—"Here 's a health to them that 's awa'."

The heroine of this song was Miss Jessy Lewars, a kind-hearted, amiable young creature, whom we have had occasion to mention once or twice already. Her tender and assiduous attentions to the poet during his last illness, it is well known, greatly soothed his fretted spirit and eased his shattered frame.

HERE 'S a health to ane I lo'e dear!
Here 's a health to ane I lo'e dear!
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!

Although thou maun never be mine,
Although even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!

I mourn through the gay, gaudy day,
As, hopeless, I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lockt in thy arms—Jessy!

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love-rolling ee;
But why urge the tender confession,
'Gainst Fortune's fell cruel decree!—Jessy!

Here 's a health to ane I lo'e dear!
Here 's a health to ane I lo'e dear!
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

TUNE—"The Lass o' Livingstone."

This fine song is another tribute of the poet's Muse to his ministering angel, Miss Jessy Lewars. According to the lady's statement, as related by Mr Chambers, the poet having called upon her one morning, said, if she would play him any favourite air for which she might wish new words, he would endeavour to produce something that should please her. She accordingly sat down to the piano, and played once or twice the air of an old ditty beginning with the words—

"The robin cam to the wren's nest,
And keekit in, and keekit in;
Oh, weel's me on your auld pow,
Wad ye be in, wad ye be in," &c.

And, after a few minutes' abstraction, the poet produced the following beautiful lines:—

OH, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee:
Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield[1] should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there:
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

AN EXCELLENT NEW SONG.

TUNE—"Buy Broom Besoms."

A dissolution of Parliament having taken place in May of this year, a fresh contest (see p. 484) took place for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, Mr Heron being on this occasion opposed by the Hon. Montgomery Stewart, a younger son of the Earl of Galloway's. And the poet, although prostrate from sickness and confined to his chamber, once more took up the pen in the cause of his friend Mr Heron, and produced the following satirical ballad against his opponents. A great many years ago, a set of vagrant dealers called *Troggers*, used to travel about the country districts of Scotland, disposing of various kinds of wares, which were known by the general name of *Troggin*. In the ballad, the poet has imagined a Trogger to be perambulating the country, offering the characters of the Tory or Galloway party for sale as *Troggin*. Mr Heron again succeeded in beating his opponents, but not till death had placed the poor poet beyond the reach of all earthly joy or sorrow.

WHA will buy my troggin,
Fine election ware;
Broken trade o' Broughton,
A' in high repair.
Buy braw troggin,
Frae the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.

---

[1] Shelter.

There 's a noble earl's
Fame and high renown,*
For an auld sang—
It 's thought the guids were stown.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here 's the worth o' Broughton†
In a needle's ee;
Here 's a reputation
Tint[1] by Balmaghie.‡
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here 's an honest conscience
Might a prince adorn;
Frae the downs o' Tinwald—
Sae was never born.§
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here 's the stuff and lining
O' Cardoness's head;‖
Fine for a sodger,
A' the wale[2] o' lead.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here 's a little wadset,[3]
Buittle's scrap o' truth,¶
Pawn'd in a gin-shop,
Quenching holy drouth.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here 's armorial bearings
Frae the manse o' Urr;
The crest, an auld crab-apple,**
Rotten at the core.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here is Satan's picture,
Like a bizzard gled,[4]
Pouncing poor Redcastle,††
Sprawlin' like a taed.[5]
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here 's the font where Douglas
Stane and mortar names;
Lately used at Caily
Christening Murray's crimes.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

---

[1] Lost. [2] Choice [3] Mortgage.
[4] Kite. [5] Toad.

* The Earl of Galloway.
† Mr Murray of Broughton.
‡ Gordon of Balmaghie.
§ A sneering allusion to Mr Bushby
‖ Maxwell of Cardoness.
¶ Rev. George Maxwell, minister of Buittle.
** An allusion to the Rev. Dr Muirhead, minister of Urr, in Galloway.
†† W. S. Lawrie of Redcastle.

Here 's the worth and wisdom
Collieston* can boast;
By a thievish midge[1]
They had been nearly lost.
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Here is Murray's fragments
O' the ten commands;
Gifted by black Jock,
To get them aff his hands,
Buy braw troggin, &c.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin?
If to buy ye 're slack,
Hornie's[2] turnin' chapman—
He 'll buy a' the pack.
Buy braw troggin,
Frae the banks o' Dee;
Wha wants troggin
Let him come to me.

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS.

TUNE—"Rothemurche."

In this song—composed during the last months of his life, when prostrate with illness and oppressed with poverty—his mind wandered to the banks of the Devon, where he had spent some happy days, when in the full flush of fame, in the company of the lovely Charlotte Hamilton mentioned at p. 338.

FAIREST maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou wert wont to do?

Full well thou know'st I love thee, dear!
Couldst thou to malice lend an ear?
Oh, did not love exclaim, "Forbear,
Nor use a faithful lover so."

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, oh, let me share;
And by thy beauteous self I swear
No love but thine my heart shall know.

---

[1] Gnat. [2] Satan.

* Copland of Collieston.

OH, THAT I HAD NE'ER BEEN MARRIED.

The last verse only of this song is Burns's—the first is old.

Oh, that I had ne'er been married,
I wad never had nae care;
Now I 've gotten wife and bairns,
And they cry crowdie[1] ever mair.
Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day,
Gin ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye 'll crowdie a' my meal away.

Waefu' want and hunger fley[2] me,
Glowering by the hallan en';
Sair I fecht them at the door,
But aye I 'm eerie[3] they come ben.

THE RUINED MAID'S LAMENT.

These lines first appeared in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of the poet's works.

Oh, meikle do I rue, fause love,
Oh, sairly do I rue,
That e'er I heard your flattering tongue,
That e'er your face I knew.

Oh, I hae tint[4] my rosy cheeks,
Likewise my waist sae sma';
And I hae lost my lightsome heart
That little wist a fa'.

Now I maun thole[5] the scornfu' sneer
O' mony a saucy quean;
When, gin the truth were a' but kent,
Her life's been waur than mine.

Whene'er my father thinks on me,
He stares into the wa';
My mither, she has ta'en the bed
Wi' thinkin on my fa'.

Whene'er I hear my father's foot,
My heart wad burst wi' pain;
Whene'er I meet my mither's ee,
My tears rin down like rain.

Alas! sae sweet a tree as love
Sic bitter fruit should bear!

---

[1] Gruel. [2] Fright. [3] Afraid.
[4] Lost. [5] Bear

Alas! that e'er a bonny face
Should draw a sauty tear!

But Heaven's curse will blast the man
Denies the bairn he got;
Or leaves the painfu' lass he loved
To wear a ragged coat.

KATHERINE JAFFRAY.

This song first appeared in Pickering's edition of the poet's works printed in 1839, and is said to have been copied from a manuscript in his own hand.

THERE lived a lass in yonder dale,
And down in yonder glen, O!
And Katherine Jaffray was her name.
Weel known to many men, O!

Out came the Lord of Lauderdale,
Out frae the south countrie, O!
All for to court this pretty maid,
Her bridegroom for to be, O!

He 's tell'd her father and mother baith,
As I hear sundry say, O!
But he hasna tell'd the lass hersel,
Till on her wedding day, O!

Then came the Laird o' Lochinton,
Out frae the English Border,
All for to court this pretty maid,
All mounted in good order.

ROBIN SHURE IN HAIRST.

CHORUS.

ROBIN shure in hairst,[1]
I shure wi' him;
Fient a heuk[2] had I,
Yet I stack by him.

I gaed up to Dunse,
To warp a wab o' plaiden;
At his daddie's yett,[3]
Wha met me but Robin?

[1] Reaped in harvest. [2] Sickle. [3] Gate.

Was na Robin bauld,
Though I was a cotter;
Play'd me sic a trick,
And me the eller's dochter?[1]

Robin promised me
A' my winter vittle;
Fient haet[2] had he but three
Goose feathers and a whittle.

SWEETEST MAY.

Sweetest May, let love inspire thee;
Take a heart which he desires thee;
As thy constant slave regard it;
For its faith and truth reward it.

Proof o' shot to birth or money,
Not the wealthy, but the bonny;
Not high-born, but noble-minded,
In love's silken band can bind it!

WHEN I THINK ON THE HAPPY DAYS.

When I think on the happy days
I spent wi' you, my dearie;
And now what lands between us lie,
How can I be but eerie!

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
As ye were wae and weary!
It was na sae ye glinted by
When I was wi' my dearie.

HUNTING SONG.

Tune—"I rede you beware at the hunting."

The heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
Our lads gaed a-hunting ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors and o'er mosses, and mony a glen,
At length they discover'd a bonny moor-hen.

---

[1] Elder's daughter. [2] Nothing.

I rede you beware at the hunting, young men;
I rede you beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak some on the wing, and some as they spring;
But cannily steal on a bonny moor-hen.

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells;
Her plumage outlustred the pride o' the spring,
And oh, as she wanton'd gay on the wing.

Auld Phœbus himsel, as he peep'd o'er the hill,
In spite, at her plumage he tried his skill;
He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae--
His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill,
The best of our lads wi' the best o' their skill;
But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
Then, whirr! she was over a mile at a flight.

OH, AYE MY WIFE SHE DANG ME.

TUNE - "My wife she dang me."

OH, aye my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife did bang me;
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Guid faith, she 'll soon o'ergang ye.
On peace and rest my mind was bent,
And fool I was I married;
But never honest man's intent
As cursèdly miscarried.

Some sairie comfort still at last,
When a' their days are done, man:
My pains o' hell on earth are past,
I 'm sure o' bliss aboon, man.
Oh, aye my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife did bang me;
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Guid faith, she 'll soon o'ergang ye

BROSE AND BUTTER.

OH, gie my love brose, brose,
Gie my love brose and butter:
For nane in Carrick or Kyle
Can please a lassie better.

The laverock lo'es the grass,
The moor-hen lo'es the heather;
But gie me a braw moonlight,
Me and my love together.

OH, WHA IS SHE THAT LO'ES ME?

TUNE—"Morag."

OH, wha is she that lo'es me,
And has my heart a-keeping?
Oh, sweet is she that lo'es me,
As dews o' simmer weeping,
In tears the rosebuds steeping!

CHORUS.

Oh, that 's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
Oh, that 's the queen of womankind
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

If thou shalt meet a lassie,
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic powers alarming;

If thou hadst heard her talking,
And thy attentions plighted,
That ilka body talking,
But her by thee is slighted,
And thou art all delighted;

If thou hast met this fair one;
When frae her thou hast parted,
If every other fair one,
But her, thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted.

DAMON AND SYLVIA.

TUNE—"The tither morn, as I forlorn."

YON wandering rill that marks the hill,
And glances o'er the brae, sir,
Slides by a bower, where mony a flower
Sheds fragrance on the day, sir.

There Damon lay, with Sylvia gay,
To love they thought nae crime, sir;
The wild-birds sang, the echoes rang,
While Damon's heart beat time, sir.

SHELAH O'NEIL.

When first I began for to sigh and to woo her,
Of many fine things I did say a great deal,
But, above all the rest, that which pleased her the best
Was, Oh, will you marry me, Shelah O'Neil?
My point I soon carried, for straight we were married,
Then the weight of my burden I soon 'gan to feel,—
For she scolded, she fisted, oh, then I enlisted,
Left Ireland, and whisky, and Shelah O'Neil.

Then, tired and dull-hearted, oh, then I deserted,
And fled into regions far distant from home;
To Frederick's army, where none e'er could harm me,
Save Shelah herself, in the shape of a bomb
I fought every battle, where cannons did rattle,
Felt sharp shot, alas! and the sharp-pointed steel;
But in all my wars round, thank my stars, I ne'er found
Aught so sharp as the tongue of cursed Shelah O'Neil

THERE'S NEWS, LASSES, NEWS.

There's news, lasses, news,
Guid news I have to tell;
There's a boatfu' o' lads
Come to our town to sell.

CHORUS.

The wean[1] wants a cradle,
And the cradle wants a cod,[2]
And I'll no gang to my bed
Until I get a nod.

Father, quo' she, Mither, quo' she,
Do what you can;
I'll no gang to my bed
Till I get a man.

I hae as guid a craft rig
As made o' yird and stane;
And waly fa' the ley-crap,
For I maun till'd again.

[1] Child. [2] Pillow.

THERE WAS A WIFE.

THERE was a wife wonn'd in Cockpen,
Scroggam;
She brew'd guid ale for gentlemen.
Sing, auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

The guidwife's dochter fell in a fever,
Scroggam;
The priest o' the parish fell in anither.
Sing, auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

They laid the twa i' the bed thegither,
Scroggam;
That the heat o' the tane might cool the tither.
Sing, auld Cowl, lay you down by me.
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum.

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